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# NEW ERA IN EDUCATION

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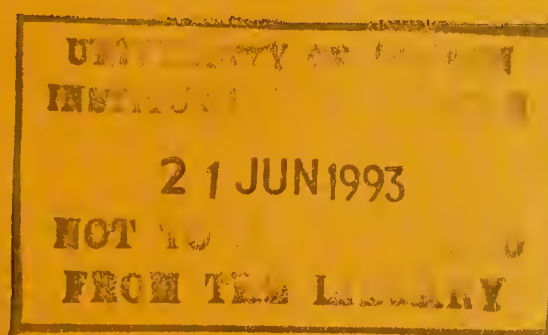
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## Special Issue: Audiovisual Education

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**Audiovisual Mass Media Education in Different Parts of the World**

Educational radio and television is capable of making available many needed learning experiences, which most teachers are quick to recognize as lending efficiency to classroom instruction. In this context it is interesting to read Adjai Robinson's description of the role the audiovisual mass media in Nigeria are playing in the development of the child. He explains how this is related to the particular culture of the country. He looks at the ways in which the media can be used to their fullest capacity, because the programmes in question are not reaching the masses of Nigeria's children in the contemporary situation.

Joshua Akintola, who has been a research and development consultant from Nigeria, wrote to the Dutch editors of *Audiovisual Mass Media and Education* (1989), that the South of the world, "is not in any position to speak and act in the field or theatre of audiovisual mass media (education) at any level of sophistication as yet. The primary issues and problems now lie in the securing of the means to strengthen an 'immature educational system' already further crippled by the lack of necessary financial, material, and manpower resources."

Although incongruities between the North and the South, also in the field of mass media and education, form a major question, it is not an issue that we have tried to express in the present publication. We only want to accentuate that in moving from a writer from the South to those of the Northern part of the world it will strike our readers that the authors of the economically more developed countries are writing about the special importance of media as a subject of education.

Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin from Australia quote Henri Giroux, who argues that education should be about the empowerment of people, and they express that media education is a crucial element in the empowerment process, because it interrogates the major producer of

knowledge in society. In their article questions are addressed and methods are discussed of how students become competent and critical users of the media, long after they have left the teachers' care.

The introductory point of Carol Ann Valentine's writing is that the United States probably provides a decent microcosm for analysing how students can best become quality consumers and individual critics of the media regardless of the national home. She describes three steps of mass media education to reach that goal.

David Butts' article concerns media education in Britain, beginning with the formulation of rationales for media education. In his article Butts discusses the problem of uncertainty over the objectives and the methodology and methods of media education. He suggests reorientations for curriculum planning.

The final article, by Hans van der Meij and Peter van Stapele from the Netherlands, states in the beginning that media, as extensions of human beings as sign users, are socially and culturally useless if people cannot use them actively and creatively. They then concentrate the discussion on self-management learning in media-education, explaining methodology and methods.

This special issue of the *New Era in Education* has been made possible through working in partnership with the board of editors of the *Tijdschrift voor Theaterwetenschap* (TTW) (Dutch journal for theatre science), who have given us permission to publish the articles of Robinson, and Butts, which already have been published in TTW in the Netherlands, (1989) but which reflect profoundly on main issues regarding the theme of the present, international publication.

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# The Role of the Audiovisual Mass Media on the Development of the Nigerian Child

Adjai N.D. Robinson

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Many countries of the Third World had their traditional means of mass communication. West African countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, used those traditional means simultaneously with modern or western designed means up to quite recently. Unfortunately, however, almost all African countries were colonized by "advanced" nations. It was unwise for Africa's colonial masters to compel Africans to abandon their traditional means of mass communication entirely. With the obvious inadequacies of African modern mass communication practices, it may become imperative for Africa's audiovisual mass media authorities to utilize both traditional and modern methods of mass communication. This is not going to be an easy task because even our educational system was, to a large extent, imposed upon us and therefore consciously and sometimes unconsciously ignored effective traditional means of mass communication which could have formed the background for an effective and inexpensive use of audiovisual mass media techniques and equipment.

## The nature of the Nigerian Society

Like most societies in the developing world the Nigerian society is made up mainly of two segments - the urban and the rural. The urban segment has been greatly under the influence of westernization thereby making it possible for western acculturation to take place. The rural segment has remained basically traditional even though it has not been completely devoid of some form of western influence. For instance, teaching in the schools in the rural areas is done with the same curriculum as in schools in the urban areas, and teachers are taken to colleges usually in the urban areas for training, after which some of them are drafted to the rural areas. On the negative side, there has always been a huge drift from the rural to the urban areas.

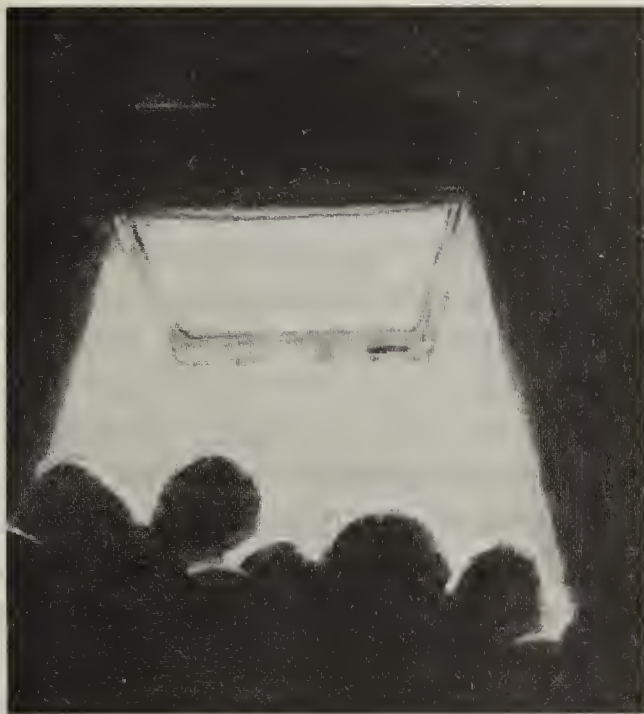
Apart from Tanzania in East Africa, Nigeria stands singular in its attempt to reduce and even check the rural-urban drift and to make life more meaningful, more attractive, and more stable in the rural areas. The Federal Government has established a Directorate of Food, Roads, and

Rural Infrastructure. The government has gone further by establishing a programme for the development of rural women and their adequate participation in national development. The rural child has not been left out in all these ventures. The Nigerian society is such that the child is generally the centre of most development programmes. In all these programmes and, in fact, in most earlier programmes of development, the audiovisual mass media have been employed. But one is left with the impression that for one reason or another the greatest impact has not been made. It may be pertinent at this point to take a cursory glance at the history of audiovisual mass media in Nigeria with a view to ascertaining the clientele for which the programmes were designed.

## Audiovisual Mass Media in Nigeria

The introduction of mass media in Nigeria goes as far back as colonial times. The main medium then was the newsprint. The limitations were obvious. If for nothing else, the impact was restricted only to the group in which the circulation took place. Two other factors that further reduced its impact were the availability of funds to secure a continuous supply, and the ability to read in English and understand the contents of the columns. One major drawback was the very limited audience who could understand. The greater majority was illiterate in the colonial master's language in which the dailies were written. Nevertheless, educational broadcasting had gone much further than the printed word. This is because while the vehicle of communication of the dailies was only in English, radio broadcasts had a few programmes in the major native languages. It is pertinent to state in this article that small as the venture was then, educational broadcasting was started in Nigeria as far back as 1933. And "immediately after the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), London, transmitted the first programme in its West African Overseas Services, an article appeared in the "Nigerian Teacher" urging the Nigerian government to introduce educational radio into the schools" (De Goshie 1986:4). This venture, however, did not catch on and it was not until about twenty years





later in 1955 that the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation set up a commission to look into the possibility of establishing a schools broadcasting service in Nigeria. As a result of its recommendations, schools broadcasting started in Kaduna in Northern Nigeria in May, 1957. The education of the child through this mass medium was only indirectly catered for; the target audience was teacher training colleges and secondary schools. By Independence in 1960, however, an educational radio English series for Primary One had been introduced by the Schools Broadcasting Unit (SBU) in Kaduna.

The introduction of the most powerful audiovisual mass medium took place in 1961. The government of Northern Nigeria with the support of USAID and various U.K. companies introduced classroom teaching programmes through television. The use of television as a medium of instruction was given a great impetus in 1972 when the National Educational Technology Centre in Kaduna introduced the children's television series, "Sesame Street". This television programme is not indigenous to Nigeria although it has an appeal for children worldwide.

More recent developments in Nigeria's radio and television programmes have focused on indigenous concepts and programmes that do have almost total appeal to the various ethnic audiences and educational levels in Nigeria; programmes whose base is relevant to the experience of the participants and rooted in the country's culture are being put out by the nation's radio and television stations.

There is no doubt that these audiovisual mass media have had considerable impact as instruments

of educating the Nigerian populace. These non-print media transcend space and time. Both can reach large, varied, and unknown masses of people simultaneously and directly. With the nature of the Nigerian society as it is today, the greater part of the society being rural and therefore physically remote from the government and national development, over 80 per cent of the population is connected to various state governments only through radio. Several studies around the world have shown that radio is the medium with the widest audience in terms of numbers. In Africa in particular radio is said to be "a high access medium from the point of view both of distribution and reception. No other medium, channel or technology offers so feasible a promise for the democratization of education. Apart from individual capacity for learning, nothing needs constrain the radio listener from benefitting from an education programme - not age, not sex, not the lack of certificates or transport or clean clothes and all the other barriers that effectively select who may benefit from traditional modes of education." (Quarmyne 1985:3). If organized properly, radio programmes will turn out to be the most effective, cheap, and popular tool of the audiovisual mass media in educating the Nigerian child. But before attention is focused on this form of the media, a discussion of one more medium would be in place.

For quite some time in West Africa in general and in Nigeria in particular the 16mm film constituted an important medium of education. Documentary films on various topics of the syllabus were put on screen on a weekly basis for the benefit of secondary school learners. These films were shown free of charge at various centres and could be shown in schools on request. The topics were restricted to those needed for examination purposes and the audience was limited to secondary school pupils of the upper forms. The primary and nursery school child was left out and also were its teachers. Not only were the topics covered academic, they were reduced to examination dimension.

### **The Integrity of the Audiovisual Mass Media**

The impact or influence of any gadget on the masses must carry an integrity that is widely accepted by the majority of the people. A number of factors can enhance the status and popularity of the items of the audiovisual mass media. In the audiovisual category the greatest contributory factor seems to be the quality of the programmes. For the masses to be influenced in a particular way



the programmes must hold an appeal for them. They must see some relevance with their lifestyles, some connection with their culture and, in fact, the attainment of the objectives of the programmes must be feasible within a fairly short time. This seems to be the fulcrum of any programmes that are designed to educate. This can be contrasted with political programmes which are full of slogans and propaganda that may never be concrete.

Availability and accessibility of the particular medium also are factors that cannot but be considered. Thus although the television and 16mm film combine the sense of hearing with that of seeing, the costs and delicacy of the equipment put them out of reach of the grassroot masses. If well organized, however, and probably supported by government by way of locating mass viewing centres in various places, the application of media in education can maximize the use of a nation's available meagre resources. Media establishments tend to have better resources and facilities at their disposal. Since a producer of an educational media programme is a subject-matter specialist with a team of research assistants, s/he can produce instructional programmes of a much higher quality than an individual instructor in a traditional environment. This is particularly true in education. The status can be further maintained when the mass communication they produce and the education activities they generate can have "epidemic" effect on the audience. When everyone sees every other person responding to the same message s/he is likely to be motivated to join in.

### **Structure of the Family of the Nigerian Masses**

In Nigeria, and indeed in West Africa, the neighbourhood has a marked influence on the child. There is hardly any family that can be called nuclear. Physical and blood boundaries are eroded so that there is free and regular social intercourse among children of the same neighbourhood. In the rural areas they gather together of their own volition excursions regularly to play or go on unorganized excursions. This may be said for children in the urban areas but their coming together by themselves is not as regular. Because of the dangers posed to children in urban areas, parents usually keep a watchful eye on their children's movements and activities. Nevertheless, in urban towns, children are brought together from time to time, either by National Library authorities as in Sierra Leone and Nigeria, or by radio and television authorities as in Lagos,

Kaduna and Enugu in Nigeria, to tell and listen to stories or to engage in other educational activities like drama production.

In addition to this there are special radio and television programmes for children at specified times. Most of these programmes have both an entertaining and an educational component, although it has not yet been ascertained whether they are having the maximum desired impact on the child. There is ample evidence, however, that broadcasting as a tool of the audiovisual mass medium has been making some impact on Nigeria's children and their parents. In the majority of families who do not possess a television set, the transistor radio is made to be a centre of attraction and learning. In the evening when children's programmes are broadcasted in the various Nigerian languages, parents gather their children around the radio to listen. It is not infrequent to see grandparents listening attentively too. The themes of such programmes have a strong local flavour and therefore hold a very great appeal for the local people. The impact of broadcasting as a tool of the audiovisual mass medium is so much that we can safely say that this particular audiovisual mass medium is satisfying **three of the five goals** set out by Sarnoff (1966:268):

1. Broadcasting as a mass medium best serves the public interest through programming which meets the desires and interests of the majority of the people.

2. Broadcasting depends on public acceptance of its programmes in competition with all other forms of entertainment and information and can best serve the public through the free play of competition, and with a minimum of government regulation.

3. Broadcasting is the nation's greatest unifying communication force in peace or war, and is entitled to the standing and privileges of other free communication media.

When applied to the use of the audiovisual mass media in educating the Nigerian child, Sarnoff's goals are met.

### **Audiovisual Programmes for Children**

The audiovisual mass media in Nigeria play some role in the development of the child. In the first place there are a number of entertainment programmes produced for children on television and radio. The impact of these programmes is especially good in that they are done in various indigenous languages, and at times in broken and/or proper English. Story telling programmes



on radio focus on traditional folktales of Africa, tales on which Social Studies and Mythology units can be built. Usually African folktales have a moral at the end, and this contributes to the character building of the child.

In Africa the oral tradition carried a lot of weight. Traditionally it was the practice in every family to educate and build their children's character through folktales told by grandparents and peers. This was a regular evening exercise especially during and immediately after the harvest season. In some ethnic groups also local community centres, round and spacious mud huts, were built near the centre of the town or village and children would assemble there for story telling. This was an important exercise for all children as their first lessons in history was by this means. In Africa's "bush schools" one of the earliest items on the curriculum was the history of the tribe through songs and stories. This practice had as its side effects a getting together and sharing. There is no doubt that it developed a powerful memory in the African. Unfortunately, this practice is fast dying out, yielding its place to the audio-visual mass media. On television, for example, came "The Tales by Moonlight" programme in which stories are not merely told but dramatized.

The effect of these audiovisual mass media activities on the education of the Nigerian child could have been greater had certain steps been taken:

1. Teachers involvement in planning and writing up the programmes should be formal.
2. For almost all programmes children's ideas should be the basis.
3. Children themselves could be encouraged and taught to write and produce their own programmes.
4. The various school authorities should be aware of the times of broadcast and thus build these times into the school's time table.
5. Likewise for broadcasts outside school hours, parents should be encouraged by the media stations and by the school to see that their children listen to and participate in the programmes.
6. As has been done in Nigeria in the recent past, local government authorities should organize viewing centres where children whose parents cannot afford the electronic equipment can assemble to watch programmes.

7. Public libraries, working in collaboration with media stations and the schools, should secure films and cassettes to show to children at regular times.

As has been pointed out above, attention has always been paid in Nigeria to the audiovisual mass media and education. It was with this in view that the Schools Broadcasting Unit started in Northern Nigeria in May, 1957, to be followed shortly after by the Western Region. It was in the mid-fifties that Nigeria fully started using the audiovisual mass media as a tool for educating its citizens. Attention was first paid to teacher education as the programmes then placed a greater emphasis on teacher training. At the dawn of Independence, however, programmes directly for the Nigerian child in the primary school started with the radio English series.

It can be said of the programmes then that they reached the Nigerian child. All schools in most of the then twelve states of the Federation used the

programmes with their children in proper classroom settings. The Schools Broadcast Unit at that time took the trouble to circulate the broadcasts timetables a few weeks before

the beginning of term. A survey of a number of primary schools in selected local government areas of Lagos State by the author revealed that lessons to be broadcast had direct relevance with the primary school and teaching syllabus and, in addition, headmasters and headmistresses scheduled periods for follow-up activities. The Schools Broadcast's authorities also admitted that the financial resources were healthy then, but these have been dwindling over the years. Because the programmes were designed for both the teacher training colleges and the primary schools, teachers were able to handle broadcast lessons skilfully and so increase the impact which was made on their pupils. On the other hand, however, it must be pointed out that the majority of Nigerian children live in the rural areas where there is no electricity to run the radio and television sets. But for the traditional means of education in the rural societies, the rural child hardly benefits from audiovisual mass media programmes. With the present government's emphasis on rural electrification, however, the rural child has started benefitting from audiovisual programmes.

There is no doubt that the television is the strongest educational mass medium. Indeed, one

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***"In Africa the oral tradition  
carried a lot of weight."***

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of the delegates to the 1964 UNESCO conference in Lagos had this to say about television in Africa:

"Of all the mass media, television is undoubtedly the most powerful and effective combining image with sound, it constitutes a complete medium intelligible to all the intellectual as well as the illiterate" (Bass:1969).

Shortly after this UNESCO conference and probably based on its deliberations, television services covering a few important towns in the North were established in March, 1962. In the case of educational television, however, it was not until 1972, when the National Educational Technology Centre (NETC) in Kaduna introduced the Children's Television series, that this audiovisual mass medium began to play a significant role in the education of the Nigerian child. In addition, it was by this introduction that the NETC started performing fairly adequately the functions for which it was set up; as listed below:

1. The designing, development, and production of instructional materials for use in educational institutions throughout the country.
2. The training of educational broadcasters for national and state educational broadcasting services.
3. The development and production of Educational Television and Radio programmes for national distribution and consumption.
4. The training of visual aids technologists in still photography and cinematography and teaching aids development and construction
5. The organization and conduction of workshops and seminars for teachers on the use and application of broadcast media and audiovisual aids for classroom instruction.
6. The establishment of a national library of resource materials and equipment.
7. The operation of a central information bank for the centralization of information concerning broadcast and visual media and corresponding technology for dissemination throughout the country.
8. The operation of consultancy services to the Federal and State Governments in the field of educational broadcast media and visual aids technologies.

These functions, when fully performed by the NETC, will enhance the profitability of audiovisual mass media to the Nigerian child. Although the availability of funds have constituted an important constraint on the achievement of its goals, it is pertinent to point out that a number of educational programmes have been transmitted

daily both on radio and television. The radio programmes include:

- "English Playschool" Primary 1
- "Enjoying English" Primary 2
- "Life in our village" Upper Primary
- "Hausa by Radio" Primary classes
- "Beginning Sciences" Junior Sec. & T.T.C.
- "An Inspector Talks" T.T.C.

These radio programmes, in addition to regular air transmissions throughout the country, are also available on audio cassette tapes for all teachers, students, or educational institutions which may desire them. In addition, there are available a Teacher's Handbook and a Students' Workbook for follow-up activities.

Like its radio programmes, the NETC's television programmes cater for all levels of education including adult and general public education. Some of the programmes: "Health education", "Choosing a Career", "French for Beginners", "Sesame Street", "Happy Mathematics", "Practical Biology", and "The Plant World".

Media packages and teaching kits are produced by the Centre, and as is done with radio programmes, all educational television programmes are available on video tapes for those who desire to secure them.

### **Reaching the Nigerian Child:**

One cannot state categorically that Nigerian's audiovisual mass media programmes are reaching the masses of Nigeria's children for whom they are designed. In the first place, there are many activities competing for the child's time. Some formal organization of the child's time has to be made; this is apart from the fact that schools must make provision on their timetables as had been done in the sixties, for listening and viewing programmes and getting feedbacks on them. What may be a most useful exercise in organizing for mass media activities is to get parents and guardians in the various local communities to understand the importance of mass media programmes and encourage their children to pay attention to these programmes. In this regard there must be departure from the usual school for academic topics. Focus on culture, focus on customs and traditions, programmes in local languages, local history, local health and medicinal practices, and in traditional religions, wild life, etc. would arouse interest in both young and old alike. Such programmes will constitute a tremendous reinforcement to learning activities in the school.



In effect, audiovisual mass media can be used to bring out those aspects of the life of a community which, though existing in that community, have either been taken too much for granted or have simply been ignored. As is stated by Keapper, "... mass communication seems in the main to buttress and reinforce the views already held by its audience ...People's social contacts, and the way they obtain information, also contribute to the tendency of mass communication to be reinforcing" (1970:285).

## Conclusion

The population of young participants in education has been on the increase in Nigeria. It has not been easy for existing school plants to cope with this population explosion; numbers are far in excess of facilities. One way out of this tight situation, therefore, is to use the audiovisual mass media to its fullest capacity. If this is done the average Nigerian child can be assured of some education. But for the venture to achieve any set goals the designers and organizers must agree on the following points (Van den Berghe et al. 1986:110):

- the exchange of experiences and the pointing out of trouble-spots
- the exchange of ideas regarding development of software
- the common development of the framework and the resulting course plan
- mutual support as regards internal expertise
- giving each other critical feedback
- attending to the collection of evaluation data

These points, when taken account of, will help all those involved in putting out audiovisual mass media programmes to enhance the impact of the media on the Nigerian child. Finally, the government's backing is necessary for the ventures in using the mass media in educating the Nigerian child. This is because it is likely that only the government can service satisfactorily the various components that go into successful audiovisual

mass media programmes. These components according to Lee Loevinger include:

"The engineering or technical frame of reference encompasses what is known as 'information theory' and has to do with the models and instruments of encoding...; the psychological processes involved; or consideration of linguistic and other symbols as means of encoding and decoding information. Economic analysis has to do, of course, with the financial aspects of communications. The semantic aspect of mass communication...is the one that has to do with the meaning and significance of what is communicated".

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## Evaluating the Progress in Media Education

Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin

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In many countries media education has found itself a place in the curriculum and a space on the timetable. This position, within the 'establishment' of subjects, usually results in demands for a formal syllabus. It has been very interesting to note the similarity of the media syllabus content across the nations - similarities in conceptual design, emphasis and orientation. The time has come for formal and informal re-evaluation of the existing aims, content and strategies of media syllabuses and courses.

The starting point is the question of why we study the media and the expectations we have of such study. We live in a society which is unequal, in which some groups are advantaged by virtue of their greater wealth, their greater access to education and knowledge, their better health or housing, their privileged social position. These advantaged groups are clearly visible because they are conspicuous consumers of resources. Why then do not the disadvantaged groups do something about the situation? Why are the inequities permitted to continue? Is it that the disadvantaged do not claim for themselves a place in the sun? Put another way how do the advantaged maintain their privileged position? It is obviously not by armed force. It is by a process that can be summed up in the phrase, "Winning the hearts and the minds of the people". Inequitable power relations are maintained by convincing the powerless that they are all right; that the powerful have their best interests at heart. This process employs two tools, education and the media. Both institutions are complicit in maintaining the status quo and we believe that media education can be the instrument by which this is challenged. Media education comes close to serving what Giroux describes as the primary task of schools:

"Places of critical education in the service of creating a public sphere of citizens who are able to exercise power over their own lives, and especially over the conditions of knowledge, production and acquisition."<sup>1</sup>

Giroux argues that education should be about the empowerment of people. The educated person has the power to determine their own thinking and hence their own lives. Media education, because it interrogates the major producer of knowledge in society, is a crucial element in the empowerment process.

In order to assess our progress in this direction we need to have a way of evaluating students' understandings, the understandings that will empower. We assume that the necessary understandings are embodied in the syllabus. Can we therefore assume that every student who is exposed to the syllabus will emerge with the appropriate understandings? What is it that we expect students to be able to do? What measures can we take if students are not understanding the concepts? Is it their fault because they are just plain dumb and only clever people can understand the media? Is it our fault because our teaching is not developing the students' understanding? If so what can we do about it?

With these concerns in mind we have spent a couple of years determining the sorts of expectations we can reasonably have of media educated students and ways of improving their understandings. The project we undertook was part of a larger system-wide analysis of standards in Western Australian schools. This 'Monitoring Standards in Education' project was an institutional response to the community's concerns with educational standards. In short there was a general belief, fuelled by rising unemployment and opportunistic politicians that educational standards were dropping. This community and political concern with standards in the "basics" provided the opportunity to identify student media analysis skills as fundamental, or "basics" in their own right. The media analysis components of the Western Australian English and media studies syllabuses were identified and it was agreed by the Ministry of Education that a statewide sample testing program in student media analysis skills would



be conducted. This occurred in September 1991 when randomly selected year ten (fifteen year old) students undertook the media analysis tests.

An outline of the scope, limitations and strategies of the media analysis component of the Monitoring Standards project follows. We assume that the international commonality of courses will mean the findings of the Western Australian study will have relevance elsewhere. This research may help you define and refine your own methods of assessing your progress in media education. Before we go any further we must stress that this should be seen as work in progress. Although the testing programme conforms to the most rigorous scientific standards it is a 'first' for us therefore we have both questions and solutions.

Our first step was to develop outcome statements. These statements, drawn from syllabuses kindergarten to year twelve (17 year olds), were simply descriptions of the tasks students could be expected to do at any given level. The statements were developed by English and media teachers, based on both English and media studies syllabuses and expressed in behavioral terms. The outcome statements formed a continuum from lowest level understandings to highest level. The purpose was to provide a basis for checking student progress and an indication of where they should be going. The outcome statements established a hierarchy of conceptual development against which we could determine student progress. The continuum is reproduced below on page 10.

Some key features of the outcome statements should be noted. The organisers on the left encapsulate what are considered to be the central aspects of media analysis. The dialogue that took place between teachers during the formulation of these strands indicated to us that these labels represented the crucial ideological and political phase in the development of the outcome statements. The eventual categorisation reflects the priorities the educators placed on particular areas of student understanding. Syllabuses are subject to interpretation and this became most evident during debate about the organisers. What was occurring was effectively a struggle for the definition of media analysis. For example, at one stage an aesthetic organiser was



proposed but rejected. The decisions made at this stage significantly shaped the project.

A second feature that needs explanation is that the ten stages of development are somewhat arbitrary (and have since been modified to eight stages to conform with other subjects). We were keen not to equate stages to school year levels (hence we did not choose a twelve stage model to match the twelve years of study in our state). We were anxious however to have sufficient stages to identify progress - to provide a spread across the twelve years. Consequently we had to have more than six but less than twelve stages.

The final feature to note about that statements is that the descriptors do not cover all elements of all syllabuses. They capture the key outcomes and the ideological dimension of this selective decision making process is acknowledged.

The next step was to develop instruments by which we could evaluate the level of media understanding in students across the state. Our aims in the evaluation were as follows:

1 Political. In the climate in which we were operating we had to convince the politicians and the parents that the children were learning something. We certainly had a sense that they were but could not prove it. We also had a feeling that some media teaching was rather trivial and fruitless. Our evaluation was to be on a sample base, neither student nor teacher would be identified and egos could be protected even while the finger was being pointed.



Figure 1: Continuum / Schema of Stages across Twelve Years

Phase	Language	Narrative	Prod. Circ.	Audiences	Values
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies simple iconic symbols e.g. no smoking sign</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies beginning/end of a story, main characters</li><li>- Makes judgements about characters</li><li>- Retells a plot</li><li>- Distinguishes between actor and constructed character</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Distinguishes between interpersonal and mass communication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognises that media products are geared to a mass audience</li></ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links simple arbitrary symbols to their meaning e.g. ring and marriage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes recurring character types</li><li>- Identifies traits of character types</li><li>- Identifies a limited range of common genres e.g. cartoons, news, horror</li><li>- Distinguishes between main and supporting characters</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Categorises the media into commercial and public sectors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Differentiates between the size of an audience for different media products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Differentiates between heroes and villains and describes the values they stand for</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies symbolic significance of colour, gesture, expression</li><li>- Identifies symbolic use of music, SFX, voice style</li><li>- Distinguishes one shot from the next in the sequence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes chronological construction in media stories</li><li>- Links character and conflict to plot development</li><li>- Links setting to time and place</li><li>- Associates common genres with audience expectations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies the revenue sources for various media producers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Illustrates differences within the mass audience (e.g. dimension of age, gender, race)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Describes the codes and conventions used to construct particular stereotypes</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Selects appropriate images to establish a given mood. Identifies shot types (e.g. closeup, pan)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies the basis for genre e.g. Western is time and place based</li><li>- Recognizes different forms of conflict (e.g. person vs. nature)</li><li>- Links setting to plot expectations</li><li>- Links character to setting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies roles in the production of media texts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links commercials to target audiences (i.e. types of products and types of images for audience appeal)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies ways in which stereotypes are used as short cuts in narrative development (e.g. advertising characters or slapstick)</li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes the organisation of symbols into codes</li><li>- Links shot types to a purpose. e.g. establishing shot</li><li>- Selects and organizes images and sound to match a given mood</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes devices for controlling narrative e.g. voice over</li><li>- Recognizes intertextual references at the level of parody (e.g. genre spoof)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links programmes to target audiences</li><li>- Understands demographics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognises spectator position (e.g. in a still image)</li><li>- Distinguishes between recorded events and reconstructed events</li><li>- Links genres with the varying pleasures they offer to particular audience sub groups (e.g. soaps for women)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Demonstrates how stereotypes embody judgements of social groups</li></ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies editing techniques for continuity</li><li>- Identifies the emotive value of language especially as it applies to race and gender</li><li>- Identifies the emotive effect of a given montage e.g. advertising</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Follows multiple/parallel plots within a narrative</li><li>- Translates a given narrative into a new generic form</li><li>- Describes the function of multiple parallel plots</li><li>- Manipulates chronological order for narrative effect</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Understands ratings and box office as measurements of commercial viability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies changes in point of view in narrative and non-narrative texts as a device for positioning the audience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Illustrates the way in which stereotypes serve the interests of some groups (e.g. negative judgements about ethnic groups)</li></ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies medium specific connections in continuity (e.g. eyeline matches)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Describes narrative characteristics associated with a particular genre</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links production and circulation processes to social issues e.g. equity issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies techniques in the construction of narrative point of view (e.g. eyeline matches, shot, reverse shot) to focus audience attention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analyses media figures in terms of the values they project (e.g. pop stars, news readers, game hosts, commentators)</li></ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links some codes to cultural values</li><li>- Recognizes the interdependence of visual and verbal codes in the construction of meaning e.g. voice and appearance of newsreader = credibility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies conventions of narrative construction</li><li>- Identifies narratives as a series of constructed conventions such as character motivation, sequence, hierarchy of events and characters rather than being a "natural" part of a story</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Understands the effects of regulatory bodies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links point of view to preferred meaning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides examples of the social outcomes of particular stereotyping</li></ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes the values operating in a given product e.g. the values in a family sit-com</li><li>-</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analyses a media narrative in terms of its construction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Critiques emerging national and international trends (e.g. effect of networking, privatisation of information)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies various conflicting factors which may affect an audience member's interpretations e.g. a black wealthy female's view of a soap opera</li><li>- Identifies the effect of cultural and subcultural groupings on audience interpretation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identifies in media products a range of myths circulating about topics of importance in the culture (e.g. science, education)</li></ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analyses a complete media product in terms of the cultural values it reflects/projects (e.g. the patterns codes and conventions of a complete news programme)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Analyses a media narrative in terms of the cultural values it projects/reflects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recognizes ways in which the modes of production and circulation affect meaning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Offers a range of alternative readings to given text depending upon audience culture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links myth, ideology and power and the role of the media</li></ul>



2. Educational. We were keen to provide teachers with information about the strengths and weaknesses of the students. The instruments were to be diagnostic. They would allow teachers to develop strategies that would build upon the strengths and eradicate the weaknesses. The tests would be used in the same way as doctors use blood tests, as a guide to professional judgement and not as a replacement for it. The test instruments were to serve as diagnostic instruments that would point to areas in need of remediation.

As experienced teachers we were well aware of the pitfalls of test design and the difficulty of ensuring that testing reflected the aim. A further complication arose because we were trying to place students on a continuum therefore we had to distinguish between levels of sophistication in the answers. We had to decide what type of response would place a student on level nine rather than level six. We were reminded of the lines from *Alice in Wonderland*:

"... how can you possibly award prizes when everyone missed the target?" said Alice.

"Well," said the Queen, "some missed by more than others and we have a fine normal distribution of misses, which means we can forget about the target".

A team of teachers developed two tests. One was based on the analysis of a situation comedy and the other on the analysis of a print advertisement. The target group for testing was year ten (fifteen year olds) and the sample was 10%. The sample was determined by an external educational research authority to ensure that it really was a valid sample. The randomly selected sample of subjects sat tests that were centrally marked. The analyses offered information about students strengths, weaknesses, position on the continuum of outcome statements, and position in relation to others in the sample. After the sample tests were completed copies of the tests and the marking guides were made available to all teachers who could use them to evaluate their own students' progress and make comparisons with the sample results, see fig. 2.

On the basis of the 1990 test validation exercise and the 1991 test marking experience, it is possible to make the following generalisations. The test results indicated that there was a

problem of shared, or rather, not shared expectations. It has become clear that many students and teachers are not sure of the overarching objectives of media analysis. They can go through the motions - they are adept at deconstructing a given image but are not sure why they are doing it. They can say all the right things about symbols and stereotypes but cannot link these understandings to values. We found that the students were surprisingly good at textual analysis, able to pick an image to pieces but unable to make the conceptual leap between the text and its context. For example we found that students could deconstruct a sitcom and make intelligent remarks about the representation of race and gender within the show. However they could not make a link between that particular textual representation and the representation of blacks in the media or the relationship between representations and power. Our findings suggested that students were often bouncing up and down on the same spot, doing more of the same, getting better and better at doing the one task and that task was invariably textual analysis. They could deconstruct anything from a photograph to a shopping centre but they did not really know why one would bother. The conceptual leap from analysis of the text to analysis of culture was not happening. The central object of media education - the ability to criticise the role of the

Figure 2

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Watch the short extract from *The Wonder Years* and then read the questions below. After you have read the questions your teacher will replay the extract one more time. After the second viewing answer the questions below in the spaces provided. You will find some of the questions very easy to answer while others will be much harder. Please attempt all the questions.

- 1. In the opening images the characters are shown waving to the camera. You will see that the figures are placed within a black frame. What is the effect of this 'home movie' technique in the opening?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. At the end of the opening credit sequence the music dies away on a jangling note. What does this mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Why is the title sequence in black and white?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 When do we first learn that Kevin (the lead character) does not enjoy school plays?  
\_\_\_\_\_



media in "winning the hearts and the minds" is not being met.

The problem is at least partly an issue of maturity. Students do not have a world view, a sense of themselves as part of a wider society. Society for them is something out there that they will participate in when they leave school. The action of analysing a television text is a school task, relevant only to them in their role as students. They cannot see it in wider terms than that. Is it an insoluble problem, is empowerment through media education a romantic notion? The problem is also partly the content and method we use. Are our syllabuses and teaching methodologies providing a framework that will help students make the necessary connections? We suspect not. It is not sufficient to dismiss the problem because students may lack worldly knowledge.

### Strategies

What do we do about this? How do we build upon the strength that our teaching has developed - textual analysis, but at the same time address the deficiency that has been described?

We need to start by making the goals clearer to both teachers and students. This involves being up front with our expectations of students, of finding ways of checking whether learning is occurring. This is NOT a campaign for mass testing. On the contrary, time wasting, educationally suspect testing can be avoided if clear statements of expected outcomes are provided for students. We need to cut through the rubric of the syllabuses and state directly what it is we expect students to be able to do. With some refinement we are hoping that the continuum will provide a user friendly guide for teachers. They can use it to ask themselves what their own students can do at any point in time and where they should be aiming for next. It should provide a model for determining where we are heading with the students. Coupled with the need for clear objectives is the need to be more direct about our own approaches. We tend to adopt a particular perspective on the media, heavily influenced by our political perceptions and present this as the single, natural approach. In doing so we must be aware that we prioritise certain questions of the media and ignore others.

This in itself is not a problem so long as we are aware that other approaches will ask different questions and therefore provide different answers. Texts do not speak for themselves; nor can they be made to say whatever you want them to say; rather they are articulated in relation to the questions posed of them. Students need to know clearly why they are looking at a particular text.

If students are not making the connection between classroom media analysis and the bigger world then there needs to be a link between text and context. After all the key point all the syllabuses do have in common is their demand that we teach students about the way in which the media present their audiences with "attitudes and values". Not all the syllabuses use these words, some talk about "ways of thinking", "ways of seeing the world" the bolder use the term "ideology". The terminology is not important, the direction is. The syllabus is really about what we want students to be able to do after they have left school. What we do in school in media education is informed entirely by that vision of the future. We want students to be competent and critical users of the media - not competent and critical for one school year sufficient to pass the examination but people who will continue to be competent and critical users of the media long after they have left our care. What this means is that the texts we give students to analyse at school are simply vehicles, a means to an end and that end is the development of critical skills which can be applied to any aspect of the media in the future. The exercises we set students, the analysis of the Australian barbecue (a favourite in Australia), the analysis of a shopping mall, the analysis of a sit com, are all simply a way of giving students skills and knowledge they can apply in the future. They are EXAMPLES. If at the end of their schooldays the students can talk and write intelligently only about the attitudes and values of the texts they have studied but cannot apply their knowledge to other media products, then as teachers we have failed.

To achieve the goal of being able to apply their knowledge and skills to media products in the future, students need to have a knowledge of HOW the media present values and attitudes. It is not sufficient to teach the particular values and attitudes presented in particular television



shows, nor that all media products present values and attitudes but to teach HOW they do this.

One approach is to use old, dated texts. Students are more readily able to distinguish the values inherent in old texts than current ones because they are often at odds with their own view of the world. The recognition will often evidence itself in laughter. Laughter is their response to the discomfort they feel when faced with values they do not share. The laughter can be used as a way into the text (what was it about the extract that made you laugh?). From that point questions of reading can be raised. What knowledge did you have that made you respond in that way? How has the class/gender/race/age orientation affected your reading? Old texts can provide a useful way into questions about the ways that the media conveys values because the attitudes conveyed are not readily accepted by the students. The denaturalising effect of the dated texts offers a way into the discussion of the construction of values and attitudes in modern texts.

A more difficult, but exciting approach is to use radical texts in the classroom. Texts which cut across the commonly held attitudes, texts which force viewers to distance themselves from the content, texts which deny easy pleasure and evoke discomfort can be useful in focusing attention on the ways that values and messages are constructed. Such texts deny accustomed pleasures and so force the viewer into an evaluation of his/her own position vis a vis the text. We have found that most students dislike such texts but are sympathetic to the political claims they make and are interested in discussing them.

On the down side such texts are hard to come by, often expensive because they are outside mainstream and if over used alienate students because they may deny pleasure. There is also the potential danger of the teacher being placed in political jeopardy if the inevitable moral guardians in the community misconstrue the teacher's strategy and intent.

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## Conclusion

There is a need to focus directly on the issue of social context. All of the syllabuses we have examined prioritise textual analysis. This could be because they have been written by people from a literature background or it might be that experience has taught us this is the most effective path. Whatever the reason it does not matter as long as the goals are being met and textual analysis is now a proven, effective starting point. However, unless we deal directly with issues of social context and their articulation in current media texts there is the danger that student skills and knowledge will remain in the classroom and we will not achieve the aim of producing the empowered student. How often do we analyse the constructed oppositions in last night's news? Is it not true that for the most part we use established de-contextualised documentaries rather than the previous evening's current affairs bulletin? There are reasons for this. Not long ago it was difficult to question the media's representation of Saddam Hussein as a double headed monster when the boy in the front row had a brother in the Gulf. An analysis of Kuwait's appalling track record in human rights would not endear us to the school authorities when they had spent the previous evening seeing television's "proof" of the tyranny

of Iraq and the helplessness of the suffering Kuwaitis.

We are now entering the next stage of media education. The syllabuses are in place, teachers are being trained for the task, the subject has a place in the educational agenda but it is not the time for complacency. The central purpose of media education must be kept in mind if the courses are not to become navel gazing exercises. We need to continue the search for new and more effective teaching strategies to take us beyond textual analysis, we need to actively question our progress and determine our path for the future. The sense of adventure which was in the air during pioneering days of media education needs to return. Teachers, through their explorations, will find paths that lead students towards the capacity to exercise power over their own lives.

## Note

1. Giroux, Henri and Simon, Roger (1989) Popular Culture Schooling and Everyday Life Bergin and Garvey, New York

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## Developing Individual Media - Critiquing Styles: A Three Point Programme

Carol Ann Valentine

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### Introduction

*We live in a world that has become saturated with the various media outlets. This saturation has been hastened by the constant rise in technology levels. A 1989 study of the United States showed that over 90 million homes, or more than 98 percent of American households owns at least one television.*

*Now admittedly the world should not be judged by studies of media in the United States, and this point will be pursued in this article. The introductory point is that the United States likely provides a decent microcosm for analyzing how students can best become quality consumers and individual critics of the media regardless of the national home. Reference to the United States could also provide thoughts on pitfalls and possible directions for other societies.*

*This is to say we no longer need public critics to tell our children what to think and how to react to media. The children are mostly more sophisticated than the adults. This is another point that will be developed.*

*Thus, this article sets out strategies for developing individual media critiquing styles. Further, the article suggests three progressive approaches to audio visual education.*

### Personal Perspective

Look at it still another way and, in this case, a personal way. As I believe the writer should provide a point of view and where it emanates, the writer is fifty-two years old. It was 1950 in Michigan and in a midwestern United States city that a round television set arrived at the home of Carole Dean Hundt, a neighbour girl. Did that arrival change our lives?

Was that a change? In retrospect, yes. My children, and I suspect, my students, cannot imagine life without television, cable services and video games. "Mom, you must be joking. Are you serious when you say it used to be just black and white?" In other cultures the questions are different but, I suspect, in whatever culture, there are questions regarding "the old days."

I view the radio with which I grew up in comparison to the media my children expect and manage each day their exposure to media is

incredibly greater. And, they expect it, thrive on it and have become skilled recipients who do not, seemingly, experience information overload.

The mass media in my family world have assumed the role as the primary disseminators of information. In addition to providing information, the media also provides us the foundation on which we base many of our ideas and opinions. Generally, students implicitly recognize this and I have many reasons to believe this is the case in my family.

### Article: Perspective

During the Gulf War, for example, there was no question of where to turn for news of the current situation. The most commonly asked question was who (or what) is on CNN now? The suggestion is that this kind of media knowledge is common and expected among today's literate media consumers.

To ignore this power, reach and influence that mass media wields over society in general and individuals in particular is to provide an incomplete education for students. All students in today's world require the kind of introduction to the media that alerts people around the world to their options. The media is everywhere so we must be able to deal with it everywhere and teach our students to deal with it everywhere.

This is a first point. The second step is an education in how the media works. The third step is facilitating the development of effective individual critics of the media. And, of course, traditionalism must be overcome with an emphasis on international mass media. In sum, if we consider media education integral to basic education in today's society all will be moving in what I believe to be the right direction.

### Point One: Require an introduction to the media

First an introduction to the media is prerequisite, i.e. a programme of basic mass media education is necessary. This statement does not necessarily mean another "class" that cuts into an already full day. This point does not necessarily mean that media education should be "integrated" into the existing curriculum. Nor does it necessarily suggest that these options should be abandoned.



What is necessary then is to implement a programme of mass media education somehow. *Point one* is that at some place, preferably early in life, there should be study of techniques employed by the media to deliver messages. That is, media education does not have to be central and it does not have to be integrated. Media education, quite simply, needs to become an issue and should be available in some form or another. We are inclined to think of curricular or extracurricular. What about alternatives like videotapes or specially designed video games? What about alternatives like newspapers, radio and family audio tapes?

Now you need an example. Teaching driver training provides one possible venue for discussing media influence in contemporary auto selection. Teaching agriculture provides other opportunities to discuss advertisements about feeds and fertilizers. In teaching "Women and Communication" we address how women are depicted in the media. History could well include historical influences of media. You name the subject, simply give some thought to integrating media education.

Thus, what is necessary is to implement a programme of mass media education. If media education does not refer to the process of integrating audio-visual media into classrooms, what then? And what if you use the school or existing available context as the venue for learning about media? What if existing events point toward the study of the techniques employed by the media to deliver its message? There are so many ways to contextualize media education.

Whatever the means, media education should focus on the ways that the media influence our thoughts and behaviours. The ultimate goal of media education should be to create an awareness of the power of the media, and to teach methods that allow a critical examination of the messages relayed by the media.

Media education should not be viewed as an exercise in "media-bashing" or moral protectionism. Such is fairly common. Rather, armed with basic knowledge, students can then begin to objectively judge the information they receive from media outlets.

Maybe this need is overstated, since it seems our students are generally aware of the power of the media. As Lisa Schmoetser, a zoology student commented, "I make it my personal business to understand the media. In the sciences, in particular, we don't pay enough attention to the media. This responsibility works both ways though. Media



education is as much the duty of the media as the individual. Ascribing faults does not do the job that science and media want done. I must be sure to personally educate myself on these issues".

#### **Point Two: Require study of how media work**

After contextualizing and introducing the significance of media, Lisa's comments apply here as well. Students need not only to know the significance of media but also the "how", as in how the media work.

The first component of any media education is an understanding of how the media work. It is a popular notion to call the media a "window on the world," but as Masterman (1985) points out, the media serves as more of a mirror than a window. By its very nature, the media shows us processed views of reality, not reality itself. The implication is that we are seeing a truthful representation of actual events. This is not always or generally the case. To fully evaluate the information we receive from media, we must look at some key areas first.

One obvious first question is: What is the origin of this information? If we know who is providing the information, and why, we can begin to examine the content of the message. We also must discuss the techniques the media uses to get their message across, as well as the ways in which these techniques are received. The effects of both sound and film editing must be examined, as well as the combination of visual images and commentary.

Consider what is ahead. What is the future of the media? What should be the future of the media? Why? Raise such issues.



Another area to consider is the particular form in which we receive information (Postman, 1979). This is important because the form can, and does, alter the message. The various forms of the media are not merely transparent carriers for information. They all have inherent built in biases. By identifying which biases are peculiar to the form we are receiving, we can better weigh the message.

Further, it is important to understand the way that each of these areas are all connected and how they help influence the other areas. Understanding the interactive nature of mass media is critical.

It is not just understanding the interactive nature of the media but also the interaction with education. Sometimes it seems that media is education and education equals media. The lines are not so clear any more. The connections between education and media are not only inextricably intertwined, they are often blurred.

Get people raising basic issues and questioning traditional answers. Be blunt. Ask questions such as: What is going on here? What is the media trying to do? What other ways could media operate? Should media be banned from education or education from media? No question should be off limits and no issues unexamined.

### **Point Three: Facilitate the development of effective individual critics of the media**

This is the most important goal but utterly dependent upon the student's knowledge of media importance and power as well as of how the media works and how it links with education. Without some background knowledge, as Bloom's taxonomy underscored, it is difficult to reach the level of evaluation.

In teaching students about the mass media, a most important concept to impart is that of *individual critique* of the media. The aim of this is to have students who are able to process the vast amounts of information they receive, and evaluate it. By doing so, they can then create an informed view of the world around them. To do so though, they must be able to distil the relevant information from frequently biased sources and form their own personal reality, apart from the ready-made version offered by the media.

There are several approaches to facilitating the development of effective individual critics of the media. It would be valuable to explore some of the

established methods and then speculate on still other ways to reach this goal.

One technique that has proven effective in helping students to evaluate information from different media sources is to have students look at several different accounts of historical events (Masterman, 1985). The students were instructed to look at each source with several things in mind. They were instructed to identify the point of view of the reporter, the reporter's attitudes, the situation where the observation was made, and the motivation behind the report. After looking at several accounts in the same way, they were then to construct their own account of the event, being as fair as possible to all the sources.

These students reported much greater sensitivity, following this activity.

Raw data activities are another method of facilitating the development of individual critics.

Working with survey data, statistic data, and other not massaged material forces people to make independent judgements and draw unique individual conclusions. Such activities can be valuable in guiding others into recognizing that different people draw different conclusions from the same data.

At one level textbooks are useless. There we have the distillation of knowledge without any necessary knowledge of how these conclusions were reached. Textbooks leave out the raw data and leave a residual feeling that this is the truth. Realizing this aspect of textbooks is another value of raw data activities.

Raw data activities leap frog the perennial problem of a belief that somewhere there is *the* truth. The individual's analyses become a viable personal reality. And we translate that reality to: "I have something to say about this media item or event and I have reason to believe that my opinion is based upon careful analyses and thought. Others might find this interesting, as well."

And when culturally we applaud and encourage such statements, it becomes no longer necessary to present credentials as a certified media critic. The only prerequisite becomes holding an informed opinion and with a developed background in media this becomes the exception rather than the rule.

Newspaper editorials provide interesting possibilities. Students could be asked to read them and then develop alternative conclusions. Newspapers provide a rich source of media education possibilities.

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*"Knowledge and understanding are worthy beginnings but becoming a sophisticated critic is exceptionally worthy."*

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Radio provides rich data for analysis. Talk show perspectives, song lyrics, choice and order of new items serve as some examples of programming that beg for individual perspective and analysis. There are many more possibilities.

Various videotapes provide still more possibilities. A popular example is "Dreamworlds: Desire/Sex/Power in Rock Video." Additional examples could be provided and critiqued following the showing of the video. And, of course, with the advent of VCR's there are many possibilities.

Film is, of course, another venue that is popular in most parts of the world and provides a ready source of material for individual examination.

Develop your own raw data exercises. Here is one. Picture opportunities where people are combining and recombining ideas. Present students with twenty postcards and indicate that in the next week all must be mailed in the next five days to media outlets with your comments and reactions. Report any responses.

What we need to address beyond the ability to provide individual critiquing is that much of it is tradition bound. One of the most important capabilities of the individual media critic is to get away from the way things are supposed to be. A creative media critic will never emerge from a tradition bound mind.

Adams (1979) encourages a questioning attitude as prerequisite for an informed and thoughtful media critic. Adams further alludes to the provocative notion of the need for constructive discontent. This concept seems an important one in accomplishing the development of individual critics. They must be free thinkers capable of such constructive discontent.

Next we address the international individual perspective. This is a necessary dimension of the becoming an individual critic. The student of mass media must break boundaries beyond the traditional. International and culture barriers must not exist. These bind the mind and trap the media critic in many restricting ways.

As Gossage indicated in *Coping with the Mass Media* the differences between literate and preliterate societies are enormous. And, by extension, they are particularly enormous with regard to mass media. Since Gutenberg print literacy has not become the general world wide norm. While in the Netherlands, the United States, and elsewhere print literacy is expected, Latin America, Eastern and Southern Europe and parts of Asia and Africa are not yet there. McLuhan

underscored that many cultures are ear oriented and that the medium is the message, it is not the printed word that is the message.

Indeed, McLuhan made a secondary point of relevance to becoming an independent media critic: "The disorder of the newspaper throws the reader into a producer role". What a good point relevant to both method and culture. The reader is, by virtue of format, forced to self organize. This self organization puts all along the path to self critiquing.

This is only to say that *point three* - developing individualized critics of the media is very important and, therefore, the most difficult to accomplish. Thus, it requires the most planning and forethought and the prerequisites of knowledge and understanding.

## Conclusions

In sum there are *three obvious steps* to successful mass media education:

- 1) understanding the nature of media,
- 2) understanding the working of the media and these lead to
- 3) inculcating understanding of the individual responsibility to become a free standing individual media critic.

Media and education are inextricably linked. Our world is saturated with media and media impacts. Some cultures and countries are more impacted than others.

Thus, point one is that media education requires an understanding of the pervasiveness of the media. An awareness of the power of media is crucial.

Beyond the significance of media is the "how it works" aspect. All of us could benefit from such an awareness. And all students of the media require this awareness.

Lastly, knowledge and understanding are worthy beginnings but becoming a sophisticated critic is exceptionally worthy.

The media educator has an important and significant task of preparing individuals for the future, not just informing them of the past and present. Begin to get others thinking about analyzing and evaluating media. Make conscious attempts to develop methods of educating for media expertise. No longer should such education be left to chance.

Media educators have a responsibility to aid in the development of individual media critiquing styles. This is a major task and a worthy one.



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## Mass Media and Education: A mutual challenge

David Butts

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It is difficult from a British point of view to be "media selective" in any consideration of the mass media as objects of study. We see media education as extending across the whole range of organised media of communication, from comics to computer games; and, while there are still teachers who prefer to run courses based on specific media - for example, television studies or press studies - current thinking inclines more and more to the belief that a coherent approach to media education must be based on concepts which relate to the whole mass media spectrum, such as construction, narrative, representation, audience, and ideology.

Nevertheless, national surveys of course syllabuses reveal that television has become a kind of flagship of media studies, a natural leader by virtue of its pervasiveness and popularity. Film study, on the other hand, is now largely limited to courses within higher education, and it is arguable that the claim of film to be a mass medium rests mainly on its outlets through television and video. Indeed, young people now use the word "film" indiscriminately to apply to both cinematic and video processes; while, for those who work in the industries, technological change has increasingly blurred the differences in production processes and post-production techniques.

Inevitably, therefore, this article will deal with issues that apply to media education in general,

though examples will be drawn where possible from the audiovisual aspects of the field of study.

### Rationales for media education

Reflection on the place of media education within the curriculum of schools and colleges must begin with the question WHY? Enthusiasts for media teaching insist that they are offering an exciting new challenge to the established curriculum, under a banner inscribed with words such as "relevant" and "meaningful". But the curriculum - necessarily a selection from all the experiences that make up the totality of learning - equally challenges media education to justify itself. The time in our lives allotted to schooling is inelastic and, if media education goes into the curriculum, something else must go out to make room for it. On what grounds should we welcome this rumbustious cuckoo in the educational nest?

Academic attitudes change slowly and it has taken over fifty years in Britain to move teachers from a stance of ignoring the existence of the mass media, through a determination to inoculate the young against their degrading influence, yielding to a desire to develop an ability to discriminate between "good" media products and "bad", and evolving towards the current belief that understanding of mass media functions, as production processes and as industries, should



precede any premature attempt at evaluation. Today there is broad agreement among educationists that media study deserves to find a place within education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Important arguments in its favour have been summarised by Masterman (1985) as:

- the saturation of contemporary society by the media
- the ideological importance and influence of the media as "consciousness industries"
- the growth in the management and manufacture of mediated information
- media penetration of our central democratic processes
- the increasing importance of visual communication and information
- the growing pressures to privatise information
- the need to educate students to meet the demands of the future.

A rationale of this kind leads Masterman to the conviction that the primary objective of media education is to develop in students a "critical autonomy", enabling them to apply critical judgements to media texts which they will encounter in the future, independent of any prompting from a teacher who, perhaps unwittingly, may be persuading them what to think. The emphasis is on the acquisition of analytical skills, and practical work - film and video making, for instance - is seen as a means to this end. As Hartley et al. (1985) have pointed out, there is "a distancing from creativity for its own sake" and this demands "that discussion and written work move beyond the expression of personal opinion and questions of what is produced to confront a crucial set of issues concerning how? and by whom? It also makes it imperative that, in practical work, the notion of the inspired artist is pushed well into the background."

Key words for the advocates of this intellectually demanding approach - an approach which has become the received doctrine of the media education movement in Britain - are "deconstruction", "demystification", "demythologising". However, there are teachers who see media study in a different light and who are prepared to justify it on other grounds. Some would argue that the making of artefacts can be a rewarding and self-sufficient activity, as educationally valuable in media studies as it is in art, music or written composition; and that, in any case, creativity necessarily involves analysis. Others would point out that the mass media, particularly television, now provide expressive



outlets for the best creative talent among writers, artists and producers and that the media can present work of artistic quality that young people should be given a chance to savour and interpret at a personal level. To dismiss these arguments as unimportant, irrelevant or reactionary is to make a value judgement, both about the nature of the mass media and about priorities in studying them.

### Content and contexts

Over the past ten years, there has been a widespread feeling that debate about a rationale and direction for media education is healthy and that decisions about what is to be taught should not be imposed on teachers by the authority of curriculum guidelines or external examination syllabuses. Recently, however, it is conceded that an agreed concept of what media education consists of must be established as a prerequisite for determining a context for this field of study within the curriculum. Media education enthusiasts will get short shrift from curriculum planners if they cannot answer questions such as:

- Is media study a distinctive discipline or an extension of one or more existing disciplines?
- To whom should it be taught and at what stage? What baseline (if any) of knowledge, experience, and skill is required to embark on it?
- How does the study evolve? Is there enough "content" in it to justify its place as a separate entity, particularly at the secondary stage of education?
- What are students expected to gain from it? What kind of "mastery" (if any) does it involve?



- Who is competent to teach it? Can teachers of other disciplines acquire necessary competence through in-service study, or does it demand teachers with a new kind of academic specialism and professional expertise?

- What kind of resources - of equipment, space, time, and money - are required to teach it effectively?

Significant decisions about curriculum context depend upon the answers to these questions. In Britain, a variety of contexts has emerged. At the primary school level, integration appears to have been unproblematical. Media study, whether in the form of visual literacy or of practically oriented project work, sits comfortably within the lap of environmental studies, language arts, and aesthetic experience. In secondary schools, four dominant patterns can be distinguished:

- short units of study within an established "subject" (usually English, but also Art, Drama, and Social Studies)

- multidisciplinary clusters of short courses, involving a rotation of student groups around several subject departments

- interdisciplinary initiatives, in which individual teachers from several departments pool their skills to produce what they hope will be a coherent course of study

- "free-standing" courses, taught by a teacher who has acquired a fair depth of knowledge and skill in relation to media teaching and who is recognised within the schools as an expert in this field of study.

Curriculum planners have tended to advocate a pyramidal structure extending over the secondary school years, with a broad base of permeation ("every teacher a teacher of media") and "inserts" within established subjects in the early years; a scatter of short course options, taught on a multi or interdisciplinary basis, in the middle years; and discrete courses in greater depth for interested senior students.

Research into secondary school developments (for example, Butts, 1986) has indicated that all these patterns carry attendant problems. Siting media study within an established subject would seem to be administratively convenient, and both English and Art have made a strong claim to be the "natural" host. But the audiovisual nature of mass media such as television involves an integration of elements that school "subjects" have traditionally kept apart. For instance, an analytical study of how "meaning" is created in a TV commercial involves a consideration of how words, sounds, and images

are fused together and of how the resultant "system" interacts with factors of financial control and audience positioning. Within the current organisation of secondary schooling, the quest for understanding could carry a student across the frontiers of English, Music, Art, Drama, Social Studies, and Economics departments, not to mention Moral and Religious Education. Fragmentation of this order would be unlikely to produce enlightenment.

Media study is undoubtedly a multidisciplinary concept, at least in terms of the disciplines currently taught in secondary schools. In many cases, however, efforts to develop courses on a multi- or interdisciplinary basis have run into both organisational and pedagogical difficulties. Simply dividing up a "course" among departments (e.g. term 1, Press studies with the English department; term 2, Photography with the Art department; term 3, Media Institutions with the Social Studies department) is not conducive to a coherent grasp of those key concepts that straddle and illuminate the mass media as a whole.

Interdisciplinary team work may achieve a tighter structure, but even here there are logistical problems in creating time for the team to plan together and in ensuring that each team member knows what the others are doing.

In many ways, the most effective media courses have been those taught by a single specialist. The danger here is that the rest of the school staff may be only too happy to allow the specialist to shoulder the whole responsibility, with the result that media education occupies only a small space in the timetable for a handful of students and there is no sense in which the study permeates the curriculum.

After its initial period of rapid growth, media education needs to move towards the formulation of "whole school policies", to achieve a logical progression through the primary and secondary years and to ensure that, by the statutory school leaving age, every student will have received at least a basic grounding in this field of study. In Scotland, a development project, aimed at evolving and evaluating such policies, has been set up in a number of linked primary and secondary schools. But the search for a policy takes us back to the kind of fundamental questions posed above. Media education presents several unresolved paradoxes. While curriculum planners query whether there is "enough in it" to justify its existence as a separate specialism, media teachers are bewildered by the range and complexity of the



sources on which the study has drawn. As Berger (1982) has pointed out, the analysis of media texts can be carried out within a diversity of theoretical frameworks, i.e., semiological, psychoanalytical, sociological, and Marxist. Teachers have to decide what is feasible, appropriate, and valuable to teach at any given stage. There is also a paradox implicit in reconciling the intellectual rigour demanded by Masterman (1985) and Ferguson (1981) with the perceptive enjoyment which very young children can display in discussing and creating narratives in audiovisual form. How should the study "unfold" from early primary to later secondary years? Is there, for instance, an optimal hierarchical order for the teaching of key concepts, or is it better to adopt a "spiral" approach, revisiting the same concepts at increasing levels of sophistication? Is it possible to define - and test - a body of knowledge, understanding, and skill which students should acquire at successive stages of maturity? Is it too simplistic to suggest that there should be a progressive shift of emphasis from practical to critical work as we move from younger to older students? And should media study be considered as a meaningful way into broader understandings of social relationships, or must we establish the broader understandings as a prerequisite to media analysis? To take a home-grown example: can Scottish students usefully discuss issues of representation, stereotyping, and bias in film and video images of Scotland, without having first acquired an informed awareness of the realities of Scottish social life on which media constructions are based?

### Methodology

Clearly, the questions of what is of value to teach and what is the appropriate context for teaching relate to and influence any consideration of how media learning should be conducted and encouraged. Hartley et al. (1985) have affirmed that

"Media Studies has no distinctive method of study and no agreed agenda or set of issues. It is characterised by its diversity."

Not all experts would accept this open-ended philosophy. Many would insist on the need for an inductive approach, drawing on the students' own experience of the media and working from the particular to the general, from an activity-based

understanding of process to an analysis of products. Others would object that personal experience is too limited to serve as a basis for grasping concepts such as interpellation, ideology, and hegemony, and that it is therefore necessary, in the words of Alvarado,

"to construct a pedagogy that precisely does not depend upon personal experience and in certain ways critiques it". (1981, p. 63)

The problem is compounded by the evidence of research that students of varying personalities learn best in different ways.

Regrettably, classroom teachers have little time to reflect upon such issues. In many cases they are committing themselves to media studies courses as an addition to a full teaching load in their parent specialism and their planning can be limited to ad hoc lesson-to-lesson decision making. Under these

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*"The audiovisual nature of mass media such as television involves an integration of elements that school "subjects" have traditionally kept apart."*

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conditions, it is tempting to fall back, methodologically speaking, on "the way we've always taught" and to concentrate on the teaching of content rather than on the achievement of learning objectives. There are signs that certain approaches are becoming established, not

because of their proven effectiveness and educational value, but as a result of an acceptance that "this is what you do in Media Studies". For example, a popular exercise consists of the quantitative analysis and comparison of the length and ordering of items in news bulletins broadcast on the same day by different TV or radio channels. Students can be kept busily occupied in small groups with notebooks and stopwatches; and, at a superficial level, the exercise can be said to produce "results". Yet it could be argued that the work is more time-consuming than profitable if students remain stuck at the halfway stage of analysis, without going to investigate the reasons for inter-channel differences in selection and priority, the implied assumptions about what constitutes "news", about audience tastes, and about the functions of "news" as narrative and entertainment. Some teachers, indeed, attempt to work at this level but others declare that "There isn't time" or that "My students wouldn't be capable of that kind of analysis". So what is the point of the journey, if it is brought to a halt halfway along the road to significance? The same uncertainty can obtain in relation to studies of soap opera - again, a popular choice, because "The



children watch a lot of it at home". Analysis of narrative structure (a favoured tactic) can serve to confirm what the students probably know already, namely that each episode is composed of a great many scenes and that the various themes are intertwined in a never-ending story line. The knowledge in itself would appear to have little educational value. An adequate pedagogy of media studies demands not merely that we "teach soap opera" but that we know why and how we should be teaching soap opera and for whom that teaching is worthwhile.

### **A Summation**

The problem we have been describing can be summed up as an uncertainty over objectives. Media teachers are still feeling their way towards the kind of objectives - process or product, experiential or behavioral - that are relevant and valuable, and there is attendant uncertainty about techniques of assessment. Teachers are uncomfortably aware that written responses (the standard form of assessment) may not be the most appropriate way of measuring understanding of audiovisual texts, but alternatives are hard to find.

A methodological problem typical of, though not peculiar to, media studies is that of integrating practice and theory. In principle, the two should reinforce each other. As Dick expresses it,

"An aim of Media Studies is to close the gap between analysis and practice, between criticism and doing. Only those who have engaged practice are in the 'correct' position to criticise; practice without critical awareness is blind, 'commonsensical', and sterile." (1987, p.5)

Observation suggests, however, that 'practical work', i.e., the making of media artefacts, tends to be placed in a relatively watertight compartment, organisationally by the teacher and psychologically by the students. The situation, to be sure, can sometimes be forced on the teacher. If a video camera is available to a television course for one week only, on loan from the local resources centre, the priority is seen as giving hands-on experience to all and there is little time left for experiment, discussion, and reflection. A video camera should be regarded as an essential piece of equipment for media teachers, and should be available whenever needed, just as a balance is always available in a chemistry laboratory, but the purse-string holders in British education have yet to recognise the fact. On the whole, the best equipped courses are those

which adopt a "workshop" approach. In these circumstances, the teacher (who is probably a practical enthusiast) can be tempted to hope that practical experience will automatically lead the students to an understanding of professional practice and a grasp of underlying concepts such as connotation, construction, and representation. The hope is often illusory. Experience has shown that the vast majority of students need a helping hand to jump the gap between practice and analysis.

Perhaps the most critical methodological problem for media teachers is the achievement of what Masterman has called "non-hierarchical teaching approaches". Effective media study demands a balance of relationships new to both teachers and taught. Teachers are faced with a situation in which, at a superficial level, their students may know more about the objects of study than they do themselves. Teachers wish to raise the quality of critical reaction beyond spontaneous comments like "smashing" or "rubbish", while at the same time refraining from imposing their own views. For their part, the students are unused to being confronted with texts selected not because they are "good" but because they are "popular". They are unsure of how they are expected to respond to them. The rules of the game have changed for both parties, producing a mutual sense of insecurity, at least initially.

Finally, there is methodological uncertainty concerning the best means and the right time for introducing the key concepts which support the theoretical framework of media studies. A good deal of media teaching is conducted with student groups which, in Piagetian terms, have not yet reached the stage of "formal operations" which would enable them to generalise and abstract. Some teachers argue that concept teaching with students at this level is a waste of time. Others believe - and have demonstrated in their own teaching - that immature minds can achieve a basic grasp of quite subtle concepts, provided that the approach is made through personal experience and experiment. To this end, practical work, of an unambitious but meaningful kind, can provide students with the opportunity to encounter, at first hand, issues of construction and selection, representation and bias. Provided that the teacher forces the links, the words may be forgotten but the experience is likely to be remembered and its significance understood.



## Conclusions

The future for media education in Britain is exciting but uncertain. On the positive side, the growth of activity and enthusiasm over the past ten years has been remarkably rapid. After an initial period of haphazard initiatives, there is evidence that the media education movement is getting its act together and, at a regional and national level, working to resolve the conceptual and pedagogical issues which we have outlined in this article. A handful of British universities are producing graduate specialists in media studies, and courses of professional training, at pre- and in-service levels, are becoming increasingly available. More negatively, the present government-inspired climate of educational opinion would appear to be inimical to critically oriented upstarts which in Masterman's words are "honourably subversive of established authority" (1985:28). There is a risk that the "technicist trap" will open for media studies and that only those courses that claim to be "practical" and "vocationally slanted" will receive recognition from on high. The Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT) has expressed its concern that, if the government's proposals for a National Curriculum are implemented,

"they would result in the disappearance of [Media Studies] from the curriculum, or in its unsatisfactory fragmentation and dilution if it is only taught as part of foundation subjects" (1988:22).

Media education is indeed caught in a tension between a short-term need to secure recognition within the established curriculum and a longer-term desire to challenge the fragmented nature of that curriculum, to break down the barriers that isolate words and images, the "audio" and the "visual", within separate subject departments. At the senior stage of secondary schooling and in tertiary education, media study may well emerge as a discipline in its own right;

but for younger students, our belief is that the media should be studied within a broader context of social understanding, a growing awareness relating to "This is the kind of world we live in, these are the forces that make it tick, this is how we fit into it, how we can contribute to it and perhaps challenge it". The pedagogical problem is how to hold the elements of such a broad field of study together. Media education may well have an integrative role to play, in drawing together the strands of communication and culture, semiology and sociology. The implications of such reorientations for curriculum planners may seem daunting, but a future generation of students may well take for granted the fact that learning and living are no longer being kept apart.

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## Round the World - WEF Section News

Rosemary Crommelin

### Headquarters

At the February meeting of the Guiding Committee in London several of the points which arose at the Connecticut Conference were discussed, particularly the request for more people world-wide to have access to the New Era.

The Committee, recognising that the journal is an important part of WEF, felt that if Sections would like to investigate the possibility of publication abroad, we should consider sending it electronically on disk. Interested Sections are invited to let us know what ways they have of receiving and dealing with the material; our only charge would be to cover production costs, and in some instances a copyright fee might be due to the author.

On the matter of the 1996 biennial conference, the Committee was delighted - and expressed its thanks-at the response from so many Sections regarding their suggestion for the venue. Among the places named, Malaysia occurred the most frequently; J. Stephenson plans to visit Kuala Lumpur in May in connection with a possibly Higher Education for Capability conference later in the year, and he offered to sound out the possibility of a WEF conference there in 1996.

With general changes planned in the university-year, which would leave a much shortened

Easter vacation, adjustments will need to be made to our original ideas for celebrating the UN 50th Anniversary in 1995. The Committee needs to give the matter detailed consideration, and it was agreed that when members are together for the L.M.L. Conference in Amsterdam, they will take advantage of the opportunity to discuss the 1995 plans.

### Unesco

In his message to Heads of State and Heads of Government (a copy of which was sent to NGOs) at the beginning of the year, Unesco's Director General laid stress upon the degree of co-operation on the part of the international community in supporting the United Nations in its efforts in, for example, Somalia, Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia. In spite of this encouraging aspect, however, Dr Mayor finds much to concern us all.

Reviewing briefly the movement of liberation from totalitarianism in 1991, and the recognition of the principles of democracy and respect for human rights, which was followed in 1992 by political instability in Eastern Europe and beyond, together with the continuation of world poverty and all the problems these have brought in Africa and Central Asia, with development problems facing Latin America and the Carib-

bean, it seems to him that this turbulent period of transition needs more than ever our commitment to the United Nations and its principles. We must keep constantly before us the famous words of Unesco's Constitution: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." He looked to 1993 as a year both difficult and crucial, but he placed his confidence in the support of the international community for the United Nations - of which Unesco is an integral part - as the only secure way in which to meet the present challenges and to face the future.

"Facing the 21st Century: the Role of Unesco" was the theme of the symposium organised by the Friends of Unesco and the United Nations Association, and held at the House of Commons in early February. WEF was represented by Dr Sneh Shah (University of Hertfordshire) and myself, and the Education Group was chaired by our Acting President, James Porter. After a short preliminary speech by Sir Yehudi Menuhin the groups separated - Education, Science, Culture and Communications - each to discuss the advantages which renewed membership would bring; the results of the discussions were reported to the general meeting, and the



symposium ended with a general discussion.

Following the Symposium, NGOs were asked to write to the Foreign Office Minister responsible for Unesco, urging again that the UK should rejoin. A letter to this effect was signed by all members present at the Guiding Committee meeting on 12 February, and a courteous and very detailed reply has been received from the Minister. In it he confirmed that no decision to rejoin has yet been taken; he welcomed the administrative improvements which have already been made, but indicated areas - such as programme planning, evaluation techniques, and decentralisation - where it is hoped there will be further progress, and he confirmed the continuing thought which is being given by the Government to the UK's position in the matter.

### **United Nations**

We were very sorry to learn last year that Dr Marion Brown felt the time had come for her to retire as the WEF Representative to the United Nations in New York, owing to her recent ill-health. Marion has represented the Fellowship for many years, and we are all very grateful to her for the work she has done on our behalf. We thank her, too, for ensuring the smooth transfer to D. Moynihan as the chief Representative, and Dr Cynthia Shehan as the Alternate. Both are well known to many of our members, and we were delighted to meet with them again in Connecticut last summer. Our thanks to them for undertaking this work on behalf

of WEF, and to Professor Gertrude Langsam as the Peace Messenger Representative to the Peace Studies Unit at the United Nations.

### **Australia**

From the beginning of this year the Australian Council is based in Tasmania, following the customary rotation between the States. The January Annual Meeting in Launceston was well attended, with representatives from Queensland, South Australia and Victoria; the new Council President is Christopher Strong, Ron Barton-Johnson Treasurer, Edward Broomhall is Secretary and Geoffrey Haward the Committee Member.

The first meeting of this academic year was due to take place in mid-March, with E. Broomhall, a lecturer in Arts Education at the University of Tasmania, to speak on his recent study leave research on Arts in Education and his visits to Canada (BC), the United States (East Coast) and Leeds University in Britain.

Several members of the Guiding Committee were delighted to meet with Yvonne Larsson (NSW) during her visit to London. As mentioned earlier, our Chairman, John Stephenson, plans a visit to Malaysia in May, and there is a possibility that he might extend his journey to visit Sydney where he has been invited to give the Howie Memorial Lecture.

### **Germany**

The German Section continues to participate in

activities with neighbouring groups. Last October, at a meeting with the Swiss Wagenschein Society, the Wagenschein Prize was awarded to Dr Bruno Redeker of Bielefeld University. In March, members of the Section took part in a study-trip to De Tristar/Gouda Training College in Holland; the project, in cooperation with the European Forum for Freedom in Ways of Education, was on "The Plurality of Schools in Teacher Training." The Section also took part in recent day-conferences in Herborn, Freiburg and Zug, and is considering a conference with the Montessori schools.

Several publications have been reported, including a volume of papers from the Pedagogical Hochschule, Heidelberg; this was made possible through financial help from members of the Section, and the publishers.

Dr Horst Hörner is the new President of the German Section.

### **Japan**

Mrs Aisawa, Secretary of the Japanese Section, has reported a number of recent events. Early in January the 1994 Conference Committee met with Mrs Seta, of the National Institute for Women's Education where the conference will be held; they met again later with the Principal, Mrs Maeda, at the General Meeting of the National Committee of Japan Unesco, of which Mrs Maeda is a member.

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## Self-managed Media Education

Hans van der Meij and Peter van Stapele

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*The operator  
Who does not move in the least  
A puppet with no  
Actions required of him  
We call a master artist  
(19th century master of Bunraku)*

### Introduction

Media are means by which something is expressed, an expression which may come through image, text or sound. Media, as extensions of human beings as sign users, are socially and culturally useless if people cannot use them actively and creatively (Van Stapele 1988, 1990). It is necessary, therefore, for educators to create opportunities for students of all ages to become subjects of media-education. In addition, it will be necessary for learners to have trust in managing their own learning process.

Lots of years of formal schooling have made most learners cautious of considering their own learning as 'best', however. But fortunately, this does not stop them from conducting their own learning in their own way. An important feature of self-managed learning is that the learner is in

control of learning and of the approach to learning, both of which are vital to his or her motivation.

Self-managed learning in media education is the focus of this article. First, we will give a description of the characteristics of self-managed learning. Then, we will discuss the various ways in which the environment may support self-managed learning. We will concentrate our discussion to how first time users learn word processing skills with the support of a manual, and how media students without experience learn to observe, analyze and understand the form of material with which performance in theatre is constructed.

### What characterizes the self-managed learning process?

Before we detail the various aspects that make up self-managed learning it is necessary to clarify the common misunderstanding that a self-managing learner *always* becomes both tutor and student.

First, self-managed learning may not be tutored in the sense that learners consciously direct or control the learning. This quickly becomes clear if one considers the fact that people learn many things from making mistakes. Some of these errors are intentional, but most are not. Had the learner be his or her own teacher (s)he would probably have prevented most mistakes from taking place, or (s)he would have corrected them easily and quickly. Learners cannot always do so, and hence, their self-managed learning is *not* always directed or tutored.

This is an important aspect of learning of which they must become conscious, however. Learners should reflect on their own learning and they will need feedback from outside to qualify and modify their learning. In short, learners should go from a stage of being naturally creative towards being culturally creative, which should be the main aim of education for learners of all ages.





Second, self-managed learning is not always intentional learning. In fact, learners may not even consider themselves being learners most of the time. Again, this is obvious if one considers the fact that learners are not aware of many of the things that they actually pick up during a learning process. They seem to learn these things incidentally.

It is for this reason that, again, reflection and feedback from outside are necessary, although here one must be careful not to fall into a trap of objectivism, killing spontaneous initiatives and the development or formulating of new questions.

### Characteristics of self-managed learning

1. The first and perhaps most important characteristic of self-managed learning is that *the learner is in control and responsible*. The learner is the boss, managing the whole process from start to finish. Among other things, this means that learners decide whether to go to a person, a book etc for information, advice, an opinion and so on.

This does *not* mean that the learning process is anti-authoritarian. Part of the learning process itself is that learners learn when it is necessary to consult expertise for supplying reliable information or evidence. Another part of it is that students learn where to find good sources of information.

2. Like managers, *learners (must) have their own agenda*, and they may expect teachers and materials to be available to help them achieving their objectives. Self-managed learning is goal-directed, it is aimed at realizing the tasks that the learners value. The aim of a learning process must be (made) clear. Students learn better when they have a specific purpose in mind.

3. Like managers, *learners (should) set their own pace*. Incredible differences in speed between learners exist. Fast learners may finish tasks as much as ten times earlier than slow ones. By giving all of these learners the time to finish their work, all learners can get a sense of accomplishment.

Because of their agenda, and also because of certain contextual constraints, learners must also learn to reckon with a fixed limit of time for

finishing a piece of work. They must also learn how to meet a deadline.

4. Unlike most managers, learners have to do the actual work themselves, which may cause them to *lose overview* of what they do and why they are doing it. The learners' behaviour easily turns into trial and error as they explore something. During explorations they are more likely to behave like the proverbial rat in its maze than as a planning manager, overseeing the work.

Therefore, as novices, they have to learn how to map, how to develop an overview of what they do and why they are doing it, making this a basis for reflection and feedback. In this way they can become explorers without losing control of their original objective. Such loss of control is likely because usually many subgoals intervene with the learning process.

### Differences between self-managed learning (SML) and teacher-managed learning (TML)

1. In SML, *practice precedes concept development*. Self-Managed Learning must be grounded on the (shared) experiences of learners. TML abounds with the advice of teachers preceding this practice.

2. In SML, *learning is constructive* with learners trying to make sense of their experience. Many learners will not see this process as learning in its traditional sense. In SML, the learners impose their views and ideas on what they perceive. In contrast, in TML they often have the feeling that the teacher imposes his or her (or the worlds') knowledge on them. When practice precedes concept development the learners become subject of this development as well.

3. In SML, *learners depend heavily on their own learning and thinking skills*. Among others, SML requires learners to think of metaphors and analogies, to repeat procedures, to look for short cuts, and to create their own memory aids and job aids.

4. In SML *learners are bound to make more mistakes* than in TML. In fact, Self-Managed Learning is bound to be rife with errors, mistakes and false starts. In order to learn from these errors and mistakes, reflection and feedback from the outside are necessary,



5. In SML, *testing is formative, productive and individual* rather than summative, reproductive, and comparative as in most TML. In SML the learner must keep track of the progress, discovering what is now known that was not there before, and discovering what is unclear. In short, in SML testing often is fully integrated into the learning process, but the learner must still be able to make a distinction between instruction, practice and concept development, and testing.

In the following part of this article we will relate the SML-method of learning to media-education, drawing a parallel between two domains of knowledge and their associated learning processes:

A. A learning process with the emphasis on learning something about definite facts. For this, the use of an adequate manual and programme can be satisfactory, giving learners all the information and feedback they need. For learning word processing skills, which we use as an example, this means mostly that learners study the manual and programme to develop procedural skills such as typing and printing their own texts.

B. A learning process with the emphasis on becoming conscious of how people make sense of realities - meaning things that have happened, are happening or about to happen - through the use of signs, using different media of communication. Such learning can be considered a learning objective in itself. For learning to observe, describe, analyze and to interpret and to decide the value of the forms of material with which a theatre performance is constructed, which we use as an example, this means that learners must use the support and feedback from experts to gain knowledge and skill.

To learn to master these complicated and sophisticated signs, learners need to look beyond elements and fragments. They should study whole (or composite) signs and codes (rules, principles, conventions) by which people make sense of the world, and by which they also create realities.

To illustrate this complex process we have chosen the performance of *The Bicycle* by the American clown Joe Jackson Jr. (JJJr) at the Cirkus Stockholm in November 1977, recorded

for television by Elisabeth Wennberg and Horst Eppinger (see Appendix 2) as an example. In this example we will demonstrate how the Self-Managed Learning of students is supported by what the teacher does.

### **Learning definite facts: word processing skills as an example**

#### **The Minimal Manual**

What can a manual writer do to support self-managed learning? Nothing can be done if the learner does not peek into the manual. It must, therefore be attractive to see and motivating to read. In addition, it must offer value for time. That is, it should also be adaptive and effective. Adaptive so that different users with different needs find it suitable. It must be effective to help users realize their goals.

Until recently, manuals did not satisfy these three criteria very well and mock reactions like 'when all else fails consult the manual' were not without ground. But the times have changed and, more and more, manuals have become a real help for first-time computer users (learners). The most innovative of ideas will be discussed here: the development of a Minimal Manual.

The most important general feature of the Minimal Manual (MM) is that it tries to support learner directed, just-in-time learning. Thus, it provides information (e.g. action information, background information and error information) when learners are most likely to need it.

There are four major principles supporting this idea. A MM is action-oriented, it optimizes the use of text, supports error recognition and recovering, and it has a modular design. These principles will be illustrated with the aid of a prototypical chapter from a MM that Van der Meij and Lazonder (1992; in press) developed for a word processor (i.e. WordPerfect).

#### **The action-oriented nature**

Learners are prompted for action early on in the MM. They can start doing things in chapter 2 (see Appendix 1), which is preceded by just four introductory pages.

Action information is signalled because actions are the most important element in a manual. Hence it should stand out from regular text.



Jargon is explained in the proximity of the task and the description focuses on what to do. As one can see in Appendix 1, the MM introduces the typing area and the word cursor. The latter is detailed, focusing on how the cursor behaves.

The MM focuses on real tasks, tasks that are functional in context. Therefore, the MM does not let learners practice pulling down menus in vacuo. Instead, activating menus is practised while learners want to access options.

The MM informs learners of just one basic approach to the programme. For example, it concentrates on teaching them how to use the menu rather than the function keys. In this way, the MM supports the development of sound basic routines, offering learners only that information which helps them to develop a good working method.

The MM also stimulates learners to explore new possibilities of the programme in sections called 'Try on your own'. These sections mention additional options that are related, but not identical with what is practised in the chapter (e.g. italics after exercising with bold).

### **The use of text**

In order to optimize the use of text to the actions of the learners there are a number of basic principles for the design of a MM.

First, the MM often does not spell out everything. For example, the manual prompts readers to search for the cues on the screen rather than telling them what they will see on the screen and where they can find that (e.g. "Check if...", Appendix 1, p.2.2.).

Second, explanations are given only when they are functional in context. Therefore, the cursor is explained, but not the status-line or what takes place automatically.

Third, the MM exploits the learners' prior knowledge. For example, its headings are goal-oriented headings to refresh the learners' memory (and to ease retrieval).

Fourth, the average sentence length is about 12 to 14 words, aiming at a reading level of an 11 to 12 year old person (as most advertisements do). The reason for this should be obvious. All the learners' attention should go to getting to know the programme and not to understand what is written in the manual.

### **Support for error recognition and recovery**

There is a great deal of error information in the manual because research has consistently shown that people need it frequently. Most error information consists of information to support three actions: the detection, the diagnosis and the correction of errors.

General error recovery mechanisms are treated before specific ones. Learners learn the most general recovering mechanisms in the first chapter (e.g. to start and end the programme). Specific recovery techniques are treated later (e.g. Backspace in chapter 2).

The MM signals the error information by putting it into italics. In addition, it is placed near where the action is as opposed to hiding it in a trouble shooting section.

### **The modular design**

The MM has a modular design which is based on two principles: closure, and implicit referencing.

The chapters are short. Learners can generally complete them within fifty minutes. There is closure for all chapters but the first. Each chapter starts with retrieving a document and ends with saving the (revised) file.

Referencing is implicit rather than explicit. Learners are informed of the goals that must have been accomplished before they can start certain tasks. These goals correspond with the headings in the chapters and work as implicit references.

### **Conclusion**

Until now research has addressed only the issue of the effectiveness of this new type of manual. In general, the findings strongly favour the minimalist approach (e.g. Black, Carroll and McGuigan 1987; Carroll, Smith-Kerker, Ford and Mazur-Rimet 1988, Gong and Elkerton 1990; Lazonder and Van der Meij, in press; Van der Meij, 1992). A minimal manual generally reduces the learning time by as much as thirty percent, and learners have been found to be about twenty-five percent faster and better in a performance test after training.

We think that the minimal manual is effective because it is adaptive. It supports learners who wish to explore the programme. For them, there



is plenty of error information and they are invited to explore when such activities may be most beneficial to them. The manual also supports learners who want to be taken by the hand, who want guidance with their actions. For them the chapters are kept short, to help them with planning. And for them the chapters are sequenced as a dart-board. Starting from the bulls-eyed core of typing, saving and printing, it advances into more complex actions such as moving text, signalling words and sections, and changing margins. In short, for both learners it tries to be a (subtle) guidance for their actions.

The most problematic design principle of the minimal manual is probably the near absence of conceptual information. Users of the minimal manual are likely to develop primarily a working knowledge of the programme, which, as in any procedural approach, is very task-specific, enabling users to deal only with situations that they have practised. A conceptual approach would help them to a much deeper understanding of the system, and, probably, get a better shot at unexpected problems. With such an approach (given enough practice) learners are more likely to become good problem solvers.

The manual maker faces a dilemma here. On the one hand (s)he should accommodate the learners immediate needs (i.e. give procedural information). On the other hand, (s)he would like to give the conceptual information that users are likely to need in the long run. Minimalists hope to handle this problem through the error-information which tells what has happened (supporting recognition), why it has happened (supporting understanding of how the system works), and what to do about it (supporting correction).

Learning has become a life-long enterprise. Much learning is already self-managed, and even more is coming up. This raises the demands for good self-instructional materials. In this part of the article we have sketched a rationale for designing such materials. We have described that self-managed learning requires management skills as well as learning skills. Self-instructional materials should help learners utilize these skills, or, when they are absent, to develop them.

## **Learning to develop concepts: understanding a theatre performance as an example**

### **The teacher**

What can the teacher do to support self-managed learning? Nothing can be done, if the student is not motivated to begin the learning process. In addition the teaching must offer value for time; which means that it must be adaptive and effective. Adaptive so that it is suitable to the needs of beginners. It must be effective, to help students realize their goals.

The teacher should try to support student directed learning, providing information when student most likely need it. There are four major principles supporting this idea. First, the learning process must be action-oriented. Second, there should be enough feedback on output produced by the students. Third, the use of theory should be optimized. Fourth, the learning process should have a dialectical design.

These principles will be illustrated with the aid of examples from students who analyse a performance of *The Bicycle* by Joe Jackson Jr. (see Appendix 2; Van Stapele 1985/1990).

### **The action-oriented nature**

We confine our description to examples of the process of how students learn to understand the form of the material from which a theatre performance is constructed. To realize this objective, students must learn to observe and to describe a performance as a definite fact. Thus, creating an adequate basis for analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (deciding the value of the performance they are studying).

Early on in this process the students are asked to make their objectives explicit, by formulating questions for use in their work. At the same time, they are informed about the different goals that they must have accomplished at the end of their first stage of learning which concerns observation and description. (In the second stage, they can work on the tasks of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.)

The students then begin with carefully watching the performance. They describe what they see and hear, and they pay attention to the different sort of signs present in the



performance. These actions are preceded by a short introduction from the teacher who introduces the character and the possible functions of the use of sign-systems: paraverbal/sound, tactical, gestical, proxemical, mimical, fashion, architectural, and musical.

What the students do is work on a real task, and their observations and descriptions are functional activities for their learning processes. The students can easily understand what occurs in the performance. The character they see is an old clown, stemming from a long tradition; his postures and gestures, and the props he uses are quite familiar to them. The well-plotted story is executed in a perspicuous way. And, after looking at the performance, the students are able to give an adequate account of their experience (compare Appendix 2).

The students easily understand what occurs in the performance, but they are not yet ready for an analysis of what they have seen and heard. Most of them lose their grip when they turn the matter over in their minds, using the materials they have produced (text, photos, and audiovisual material). Clearly, this is not surprising. There are many signs in the performance coming from different systems: voice, posture, gesture/touch, movement/distance, mimicry/physiognomy, make-up, hair-style, costume, accessory, decor, stage props, lighting, music, sound, and audience. All of these signs are probably related to each other and subject to different codes (rules, principles, and conventions), and possibilities of noise. In addition, they have different functions in the making (structuring) of the performance. In short, the students seem to find themselves in the same situation as the clown.

Of course, the students work hard to get a hold of the cycle, which in their case are the events taking place in a regularly repeated order, but they never seem to succeed. In this stage of their learning process, feedback on the output produced by the students is necessary.

### **The provision of feedback on output**

On the basis of the students' experiences the teacher now can give information that will

enable students to develop a deeper understanding of the performance. With this information they can describe the different signs in the performance. For optimal results, the teachers' feedback must be placed where and when the action is. In addition, it must be detailed and precise, and enable the students to take back their control of the learning process.

The teacher advises the students to restrict their attention to the start of the performance, when the stage is lit by a main light, and the orchestra plays a fanfare. The clown enters. No...he does not, because he cannot find the opening between the curtains. Two spots are directed to the curtains, until the clown really enters. Then the spotlights are removed from the curtains and the clown, the main light is dimmed, the fanfare has come to an end, and the clown is in the dark.

The teacher discusses this situation with the students, in the course of which it must become clear that it is necessary to describe precisely in which way the different signs are used. In short, the students must come to realize precisely their objectives of learning. The students then will discover that a variable, but limited number of signs is used in action, and that often only a few of these signs are used in a particular way. In addition, they will realize that especially the latter ones are worth to take notice of.

Students then are asked to give examples of 'signs used in a particular way'. The use of light in the beginning of the performance is an example. In the circus, once the lights are on and the lion tamer enters with the lions, the lion tamer certainly will not be left in the dark. Somewhere else the entrance of a trade-union representative, tangled in deep and serious conflict after long and hard negotiations and confronting the press, is another example. Certainly neither he nor the journalists expect a dimming of lights.

At this point of describing the performance the students will become (more) aware of the fact that they are considering different codes and sub-codes (rules, principles, and conventions) with respect to the use of signs in different contexts (situations in which similar signs occur). This is, therefore, the right time to confront the students with relevant theory.



## **The use of theory**

In this discussion of theory one can review some of the problems of observing and describing the use of theatrical sign systems, and their interrelationships, as a basis for analysis, interpretation and evaluation. It is the teacher who can make students (more) aware that they are considering different codes and sub-codes with respect to the use of similar signs in different contexts. And it is the teacher who can relate this to aspects of semiotics (Elam 1980). And it is the teacher who can help them draw three conclusions on the basis of their work:

1. To analyze a specific performance, they should compare it with other, similar and different, contexts. Students should realize that a complete analysis of a specific context can never be made by merely 'close reading'. People can never understand a context without comparing it (consciously or not) to other contexts.

2. It is the specific context (i.e. the performance the students are studying), that determines the codes and sub-codes to be used, which at the same time create that context.

3. The students now have four terms with which they can form a rather accurate description and analysis of a performance. All of their specific questions should be cast into one of the following terms for an answer: present / used / used in action / used in a particular way.

What the students have learned so far is to observe and describe the performance as objectively as possible. This enables them to perceive and appreciate its rhythm and pattern as a basis for further examination. The use of theory here is only partly related to the process of feedback on output produced by the students, because the teacher will chose to bring in that (part of) theory which (s)he knows is necessary at a certain point. It is like in the beginning of the whole process, where the teacher just gives a short introduction into the nature and possible functions of different sign-systems. Such an introduction may be extended, for example, by studying how one can make a semiotic analysis of theatre performances (e.g. Kowzan 1976).

## **The dialectical design**

Obtaining and developing conceptual information takes time, and so does developing

a certain amount of experience or skill. Opening and explicit referencing alternates with closure and implicit referencing. Likewise there will be forward and backward referencing and a balancing between exploratory behaviour and guided instruction.

## **Conclusion**

All students are able to do the work, and to learn because it is a natural process. All people normally learn to observe, and to render their experiences to other people. This making sense of realities, also of the reality of and in a performance, is based on concrete observation experiences, and social interaction on realities in our world, which, in a manner of speaking, can be felt and touched.

## **General conclusion**

In general, our experience strongly favours the action-oriented, dialectical approach of learning as a way to help students obtain and develop conceptual information. It gives them the possibility to be in control of their learning, which does *not* contradict the fact that they should also learn to consult expertise for supplying reliable, relevant information or evidence. In discussion and cooperation with each other, and with the teacher, they learn to render and to evaluate what they learn, and how to continue their learning process. In this way they learn to become explorers, without losing control of their original objective.

In our description of the main aspects of the learning process we have tried to make it clear that practice should precede concept development, that learning is constructive, that students depend on their own learning and thinking skills, that reflection, that the provision of feedback, and that the use of theory supports this learning. In addition, we have pointed out that this learning also means learning from errors and mistakes, and from failing to solve difficult questions immediately.

Students should reflect upon their learning, especially on the output of their work. Only with such reflections will they be able to overcome unexpected problems. And only reflection will assist them in making a plan for observing and description. For these reflections an interplay of



support by feedback from the teacher is needed to qualify and modify both the learning process and its results. Such feedback simultaneously serves as a formative and individual test and should be fully integrated into the learning process. At the same time it should enable students to make the distinction between instruction, practice, and concept development on the one hand, and testing on the other. Clearly, this too is subtly supported by various teacher actions. Namely by the teachers' opening and closure actions, by the teachers' explicit and implicit referencing, and the teachers' forward and backward referencing.

Students will become masters and mistresses of the art of studying and understanding the art of theatre when they learn how to build and to develop their concepts about theatre, and how to use them. They will learn that it is necessary to get to know all of the possible options before making choices. All of this, they do themselves, it is their responsibility.

Feedback from the teacher will strengthen their growing insights and understanding that and how they, like artists, are able to use contrasts and to make choices, to create and present their rendering of feeling and thoughts about realities.

The learning process we have described concerns the development from being naturally creative towards cultural creativity. This is a very complex phenomenon. It is difficult to grasp and to understand. It is important, we think, that students and teachers alike should always keep alive their feelings of wonder, of surprise and admiration for how inventive people use signs to create realities. They should be like all the Joe Jacksons in the world who create a played reality of segregation and contrivance where the human being overcomes all difficulties in the end and gains victory.

This is, probably, the reason why members of his audience became part of Joe Jackson's performance, and why they laughed and cheered and clapped.

In following the paths that we have sketched here, students are likely to become aware of, and they begin to understand how, the creation of such a reality, like their own work, is a work of art, beginning in mastering the outside world, and then growing inside you. It is like Joe

Jackson tells in an interview after the performance:

"I get one theory, and I am learning it now; the older you get the more delicate you get, and the better you think, and ... you can figure out people then. I remember when I first started to do the act all I had in my mind was ... soon as I do this trick, and the bicycle has got to do this, then I got to step on the horn... Well, now it is a reaction that is inside of you, and you have that feeling with the audience. You don't rush them. You think, take it easy ... enjoy yourself."

**Enschede and Diemen, 28. March, 1993**

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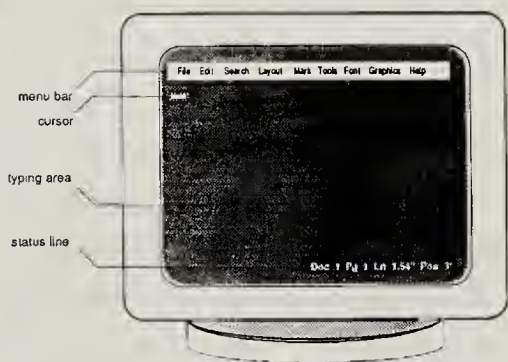
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APPENDIX 1: Chapter 2 from MM (Lazonder and Van der meij 1992)

2. Typing

*The typing area*

You type your documents in the typing area.



The short line that is brightened on the screen is called the cursor. It marks where the next letter you type will appear. If you type the cursor moves to the right. The cursor tells you 'where you are'.

*Typing a text*

1 Type the text below. Do not press the ENTER key and try not to correct typos. See what happens.

Saturday September the 14th the basketball club "'Dunk'68" will be collecting old paper. The profits of this action will be used to buy new shirts for our junior members. We hope that you cooperate. Could you please put the old paper on your doorstep before 9 a.m.? We thank you for your help!

*Saving a text*

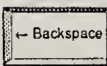
If you end WordPerfect now your text will be lost forever. To prevent this, you must save your text so that you may use it later.

- 1 Go to the menu bar by pressing the ALT key.
  - 2 Press the v key.
  - 3 Press the v key until you reach the command SAVE.
  - 4 Press the ENTER key.
- If you have chosen a wrong command and you have pressed the ENTER key, then you can correct this by pressing the F7 key.

You must give your file (your text) a name. Under that name you can always find the text. To prevent confusion you should give each file a separate name.

Check if the following message appears on the screen: Document to be saved:

- 1 Type the name DUNK68.WP
- It does not matter whether you use capitals or small print.



- Typos can be corrected by pressing the BACKSPACE key. Then type the correct text.
- 2 Press the ENTER key.

The lamp near the diskette brightens and you will hear a humming sound. WordPerfect saves the file.

See if the text A\DUNK68.WP appears on the screen. WordPerfect then has saved the file.



## APPENDIX 2: Description of a performance of 'The Bicycle'



The stage is lighted by a main light; the orchestra plays a fanfare. The clown enters. No... he does not, because he cannot find the opening between the curtains. Two spots are directed to the curtains, until the clown really enters. Then the spotlight are removed from the curtains and from the clown, the main light is dimmed, the fanfare has come to an end, and the clown is in the dark.



Then one of the spotlights finds him again, the clown starts to pay attention to his old, worn-out and only partly repaired clothes; he brushes them off, tries to remove a stain which turns out to be a hole, makes a crease in his trousers, his hat falls - he cleans it, and so on, making non-verbal jokes in the mean time.



The audience laughs with the clown; a relaxed, cheerful atmosphere arises;

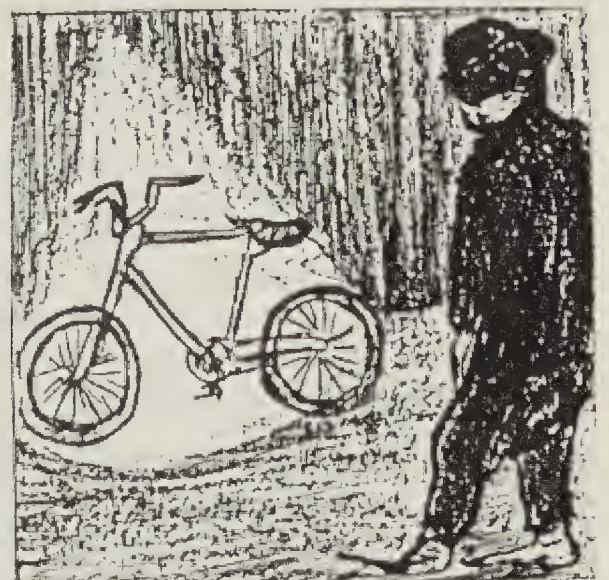
members of the audience laugh, cheer, and clap. Between his small acts the clown looks at his audience, gestures, and laughs with them.

The clown is dancing to the music of the orchestra, and ... suddenly he is confronted with a for him strange object, a bicycle (spotlight on bicycle). He wants to take the bicycle with him, but he does not quite dare to do this.

Conspiracy-game with the audience; spotlight away from the bicycle; the clown takes it with him.

He tries to cycle, but gets mixed up with everything: his clothes, the horn on the bicycle, the handle-bar, the pedals, the frame. He mounts as much as three times, and succeeds too, for a while; but every time something goes wrong.

Then the clown puts the bicycle,







that has gone to pieces, together in a wrong way, the remaining pedal points upwards, he mounts ... OUCH! The audience is amused. And then, victory after all; the clown claps his hands, the orchestra starts up, and standing on top of his bicycle the clown, one foot pedalling, cycles around the ring.

Laughter, cheering, ovation. The audience understands; the clown gains the victory, despite the fact that everything went wrong.

*(Performance of 'The Bicycle' by Joe Jackson Jr. at the Cirkus, Stockholm in November 1977, recorded for television by Elisabeth Wennberg and Horst Eppinger / see Van Stapele 1985/1990)*

**Illustrations by Lida Dijkema.**

<- Continued from Page 25

## WEF Section News

In early February the Section celebrated the publication of the Tanka Journal with a party at Gakushi Kaitan, attended by about 120 guests including Professor Chiba, for many years the Japanese delegate to Unesco and now a member of the Unesco National Commission in Japan, and Mrs Ishigami, head of the International Department.

Mrs Aisawa reports that the building of the United Nations University, in the Aoyama district of Tokyo, has now been completed. Professor Chiba will be the Japanese Section's delegate to the UNU.

Plans for the 1994 Conference are making good progress.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden death of Kay Hemming, last January. She was a friend to many, both in WEF GB and in the wider Fellowship overseas, who will have happy memories of meeting with her at WEF conferences, and will want to join with us in expressing deep sympathy to James.



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**NEW ERA IN EDUCATION** is the termly journal of the **World Education Fellowship (WEF)**. The Fellowship is an international association with sections and representatives in more than twenty countries, which has played a continuing role in promoting the progress of educational ideas and practices in the twentieth century.

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Founded in 1921, the World Education Fellowship is voluntary and non-partisan, and enjoys the status of a Unesco non-governmental organisation category B. It is open to educators, members of associated professions, and to all members of the public who have a common interest in education at all levels. The Fellowship meets biennially in international conferences, publishes books and pamphlets, and, through its national sections, participates in workshops, meetings and developmental projects. The Fellowship does not advocate any dogma; each member is free to put the principles indicated below into practice in ways which are best suited to the environment in which he/she is living and working.

### **PRINCIPLES OF THE WEF**

- (a) The primary purpose of education today is to help all of us to grow as self-respecting, sensitive, confident, well-informed, competent and responsible individuals in society and in the world community.
- (b) People develop these qualities when they live in mutually supportive environments where sharing purposes and problems generates friendliness, commitment and cooperation. Schools should aim to be communities of this kind.
- (c) Learners should, as early as possible, take responsibility for the management of their own education in association with and support from others. They should be helped to achieve both local involvement and a global perspective.
- (d) High achievement is best obtained by mobilising personal motivation and creativity within a context of open access to a variety of learning opportunities.
- (e) Methods of assessment should aim to describe achievement and promote self-esteem.

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE WEF**

In order that these principles become a reality, WEF endeavours to:

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- (d) foster educational contacts between all peoples including people from the third world in order to further international understanding and peace.
- (e) promote education as a lifelong process for all people, regardless of sex, race, beliefs, economic status or abilities.
- (f) encourage cooperative community involvement in clarifying educational goals and undertaking educational programmes.
- (g) secure for teachers the training, facilities, opportunities and status they need to be effective, professional people.

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## Of Battles Long Ago

Sir Michael Sadler said that, "a national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and 'of battles long ago'".

This is an uncomfortable time to be pondering on 'battles long ago', since they have an unpleasant sense of reviving themselves, both literally and metaphorically. How difficult it has always been to imagine that a political assassination, part of a sectarian feud among tiny countries, could have led to the First World War. And yet, and yet... So soon after the trumpeting of a 'new world order', we seem to be powerless to stop a pointless and barbarous war in former Yugoslavia.

This issue of the *New Era in Education* also sees some old educational battles revisited. It is not always easier to understand the point of those controversies. This week the British government has apparently backed down over the question of testing and the National Curriculum, and accepted a report which will cut the testing in half. The WEF Book Award for 1992 goes to John Raven's *The Tragic Illusion: Educational Testing*, which sets out the limitations of the approach the government had adopted, based on a broad body of research.

Margaret Sands examines another hypothesis which has long been close to the heart of the British government, among others: teachers fail because they are inadequately prepared in the subject matter which they will present professionally. By examining the times at which trainee teachers drop out, and what they have to

say about their experiences, Sands demonstrates that this is not the case.

The hardest thing to imagine is that the commonsense which Raven and Sands put forward could ever have been disputed. Our other contributors also state the obvious. Theodore MacDonald argues that the best way of teaching children to read is to involve their parents as teachers. Tatyana Zelenko argues that the most important thing about engineers and scientists is that they are living, creative, feeling individuals, and that their education should include the development of their creative abilities. And Frances Fletcher argues that black girls are doubly disadvantaged by sexism and racism, and that even conscious attempts at anti-sexism and anti-racism is unlikely to provide them with positive self-images. And Ahmed Noor Khan argues for the use of audiovisual media in education in Pakistan. (The latter belongs, thematically, in the previous issue of *The New Era in Education*, but lack of space prevented its inclusion.)

In saying that the contributors present commonsense, or state the obvious, I do not wish to diminish the importance of what they say. Battlefields only occur where conflicting viewpoints clash, and these things will need to be said again and again until all young people are educated in a way which respects individuality and promotes creativity and self-respect.

**David Turner**



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# Audiovisual Mass Media for Education in Pakistan: Problems and prospects

Ahmed Noor Khan

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## Introduction

For centuries the only media of instruction used by teachers have been chalk and talk with the supplement of textbooks. Gradually visualization through models, charts, and pictures introduced the first visual aids used in teaching. New inventions, like recording of sound and projection implemented in the teaching process, opened the era of audiovisual aids, and the technological development brought newer, more modern educational technology equipment, methods, and techniques.

The importance and use of television for the classroom has been affirmed by sophisticated observers and by research. Gerald Beadle of the BBC amply justified this notion when he said:

"Next to the home and school I believe television to have more profound influence on the human race than any other medium of communication... Civilizations grow and prosper by making themselves attractive spiritually as well as materially. I use the word spiritual to include everything appealing to the intellect, the conscience, the sense of beauty, and the humour of man. If television lives up to this broad and high ideal it will prosper and posterity will bless it."

The impact of audiovisual mass media and its role in developing countries cannot be ignored. The audiovisual mass media, especially radio, have been found to be major sources of initial and additional information. Audiovisual mass media are mainly available to predominantly urban populations. If we take Pakistan as an example, in the urban setting only 33% have such a facility.

There has always been a felt need to accelerate the pace of the country's development and rate of literacy by exploring new ways and means for reaching the masses through alternative approaches. Radio and television are the best alternatives for reaching the masses although the latter has not proved to be cost effective.

Due to the low literacy rate, less exposure, and the lack of relevance of the message, the effect of mass media in developing countries has not been so evident as in the developed countries. Quite a number of developing nations have made some form of investment in educational television. An honest evaluation would indicate that the results have seldom matched the expectations.

Despite this, educational television is capable of making available many needed and inaccessible learning experiences which most teachers are quick to recognize as lending efficiency to classroom instruction. Educational television brings about a continuing cooperative planning by teachers, supervisors, learning materials experts, and skilful ETV production teams. Educational television at its best results from the outgrowth of curriculum planning, of study content analysis, and of the selection and interrelated use of the most appropriate instructional media.

As teachers we should understand the great hold television has on our young people and realize its potential strength. We should also realize the inherent danger of its reducing viewers to a passive, dreamlike identification with what too often is provided as television entertainment.

## Economy

The economic structure is predominantly agrarian with 72 per cent living in rural Pakistan. The standard of living, though higher than the standard in the neighbouring South Asian Countries, is not enviable since the increase in per capita income is diluted due to high rate of population growth - 3.1 per cent annually. Thus, the access of common man to proper health, education, housing, and other basic facilities poses a great challenge to planners and policy makers.

Pakistan's per capita income according to World Bank Report, 1986, was US \$380.00 per annum in 1984. The annual growth rate in GNP has been 6.5 percent. Though primarily an agrarian economic structure, the process of urbanization in the country is fast taking place due to differentials in earnings, prospects of gainful employment in urban centres, and inadequacy of basic facilities like health, education, transport, electricity, and drinking water in rural Pakistan.

## Education

The literacy rate as estimated in 1981 Census was 26.2 percent, the lowest rate in Asia and the Pacific region. According to this Census report only 13 million people have attained some level of education; 46 percent have passed primary education, (69% males, 31% females); 23 per cent middle level (75% males and 25% females), and 20% matriculation (77% males, 23% females). After matriculation the percentage falls to 6 per cent for higher secondary, (74% males, 26%



females); 4 per cent for graduates (74% males, 26% females), and 1 per cent for post-graduates (75% males, 25% females). The percentage of engineering and medical graduates is 0.28 and 0.25 respectively. Out of medical graduates 22% are females. Female law graduates comprise only 3%.

Education receives only 6 percent of the total budget of Pakistan. According to the UNESCO standard of 4 per cent allocation on education, less than 2 percent of the total GNP is presently invested as compared to Malaysia's 6.7 percent, Turkey's 5.6 percent, Iran's 5.4 percent, Sri Lanka's 5 percent, and India's 2.9 percent (1988). In the area of education the government has planned to increase the participation rate at primary level to about 75 percent from the level of 50 percent in 1988 and to increase the literacy rate from 26.2 percent to 50 percent by 1990. It is generally agreed that a minimum literacy rate of 50 percent is essential to ensure a take off position for development in a country. The priority given to eradication of illiteracy and promotion of scientific and technical education in the Prime Minister's Five Point programme forms the basis of the educational programme of the government.

The fact that Pakistan is a developing country implies that the priority for national development is very high. In respect to certain indicators of socioeconomic development such as education and literacy the country is much lower as compared to many other countries of the World, particularly India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. The policies and plans prepared and implemented since 1947 have presented very different strategies for the acceleration of the pace of development in the country.

#### **Audio media for education: An overview**

In view of the importance and urgency of eradication of illiteracy audio programmes through Radio Pakistan were launched from all its stations. Earlier, Radio Pakistan had launched a programme entitled 'Alif Ujala' (L for light) from all its stations. The programme was designed to enlist and motivate the teachers and the taught and to give a report on the work done. These programmes have been refined and enriched and have helped the revival of literacy centres all over the country which were either inactive or were functioning at a very low rate of attendance. A very large number

of illiterate persons were thus motivated to start learning at the formal literacy centres.

This concept has been professionally and critically examined by the broadcasting organisations in South Asia as well as the Asian Institute of Broadcasting Development at Kuala Lumpur in December, 1984. The 'Alif Ujala' initiative and its bold execution has indicated that radio, apart from informing, educating, and entertaining its listeners, is also capable of playing

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***"Radio, apart from informing, educating, and entertaining its listeners, is also capable of playing a socially useful role".***

---

a socially useful role. It has the power to reach further and faster into every corner of remote rural areas than any other media. Its low cost and repeated contacts, compared with the cost of contacts through conventional methods, make the radio

programmes doubly attractive for the promotion of literacy and adult education.

#### **Audiovisual media for education: Pakistan T.V.**

Pakistan Television covered more than 82 per cent of the total population and more than 34 per cent of the total area of Pakistan. It was during the media boom of the sixties that an idea to introduce television in Pakistan was first conceived. This was in 1963. An agreement between the Government of Pakistan and the Nissan company of Japan was initiated. A pilot station in Lahore was first agreed upon for observing the operation for three months. This was later handed over to the Government for continuing the operation and expansion in the country. The primary motive was providing entertainment to the general public at large.

The very following year, in November 1964, the project was fully commissioned. The beginning was made, however, in the wake of mounting opposition from the people who demanded that such costly luxuries should not be popularised at the cost of prevailing abject poverty and deprivation of the basic necessities of the common man.

The escalation of stormy debate and resistance from the people compelled the Government to take a defensive posture by declaring that the installation of television was intended to educate the teeming millions who were illiterate. Such a stand was taken only to divert attention of the people from the chaotic conditions prevailing in the country after the India-Pakistan War of 1965.

When an analysis is made of the currents and counter currents that swept the country in mid sixties, it seems that the establishment of television as a mass media in Pakistan had two objectives,



real and assumed. In reality the Government's intention was to provide entertainment to the people to divert their attention from the impending political and socioeconomic upheaval which was brewing in the country due to the ravages of the Indo-Pakistan war. Although the assumed objectives were to provide education for raising the rate of literacy, to lessen poverty by providing skill oriented education, and to raise the standard of living, such objectives receded into the background under the claim that television as a mass media was meant for providing information and entertainment to the people. However, there were no arrangements available for giving orientation and training to the manpower to work on television. The only alternative was to look to the cinema industry and ask for its manpower. The television programme became recreational instead of becoming pro-educational. The managers ignored the manpower available in the education field and were tempted to further strengthening entertaining programmes by introducing a new change in the whole set up. Advertising was added to the entertaining programmes in order to earn more revenue. Commercialization of television dominated the policy makers and opened up the case for turning it into a corporation. This further boosted the television industry and demand for television sets shot up.

### **The first move**

By 1972 the alarming low literacy rate in the country caught the serious attention of the Government. Responding to the compelling need of the country to promote adult literacy and the objectives of National Education Policy, PTV devised and produced several major educational programmes covering adult functional literacy and formal school and college education.

An "Education Cell" was created. Programmes to produce television lessons for enhancing literacy were started. The UNICEF became the major funding agency in the whole operation. About 500 Community Centres were established in the country. Television sets, teachers, and primers were provided for each Centre. Arrangements for teaching male and female groups were made separately. Educational features like "Science Magazine" for students, National Geography, and Medical Education through "TV Clinic" were added to the ongoing programmes.

### **Educational Channel**

Pakistan Television for the first time in 1982 established a separate division for producing and

telecasting television programmes in education. There has been a persistent demand from Education and other ministries to establish a separate second channel for education. The PTV presented programmes on Adult Functional Literacy Project (AFL) spread over many cycles and ran full courses of hundreds of telelessons based on booklets and the primer, Naya Din (New Day). These lessons were telecasted twice a day except on Fridays. The transmissions were made separately for men and women who were enrolled in the Community Viewing Centres run by various governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the country. The adult viewers acquired basic literacy skills and insights into such practical subject areas as health and nutrition, saving and budgeting, child care, vegetable growing and agriculture.

### **The second move: Allama Iqbal Open University and audiovisual mass media**

The establishment of Open University in Pakistan in 1974 gave a new turn to the educational system. With its philosophy to provide education to all at the doorsteps, both visual and audio mass media assumed great prominence and significance.

The Allama Iqbal Open University relies on a multimedia approach for educating people even in the most remote corners of the country. The Institute of Educational Technology of the Open University is fully equipped with its radio and television studios and trained professional and technical staff. The University does not depend upon Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation or Pakistan Television Corporation for the production of its programmes. It has only to coordinate its activities with PBC and PTV for the scheduling of transmission programmes.

The PTV and the PBC transmissions support and supplement university courses from the Basic Functional Literacy to higher levels.

### **Problems and prospects**

#### *High costs of transmission.*

Highly innovative measures are replacing costly transmission through the production of audio/video cassettes, video discs, film slides, and flip charts.

#### *Visual Literacy*

The introduction of television into the educational process has created the need for audiovisual literacy. The language of television is extremely rich, expressive, and powerful, but without the acquisition of visual literacy skills, viewers cannot obtain more than a shallow understanding of the content.



It takes a number of years for an educational television agency to develop the skilled manpower necessary for striking a balance between the requirement of TV production and the objectives of the educators. Efforts are under way to use radio and television to support both formal and informal educational programmes in Pakistan. The dispersal of student groups of Allama Iqbal Open University as far away as the borders of the country itself has necessitated use of radio and television media to reach over 50,000 students each semester.

#### *Coordination*

There is a felt need that telecasting broadcasting agencies should maintain close coordination and collaboration with educational institutions for effective use of mass media at the national level.

#### *Scheduling*

There has been a persistent demand to have separate channels for radio and TV, exclusively for educational programmes with independent authorities comprising media and educational organizations on their governing boards.

#### *Communication gap between academic and media personnel*

Understanding between the academics and media men is most important for the successful and effective presentation of educational programmes through television. The difference of background and training between the two generally differs. This difference of perception about the role of the media in education causes great harm resulting in a "communication gap". This is what is happening in most of the developing countries. This gap must be removed in order to enable the two sides to appreciate the potentials and limitations of media with a proper perspective.

#### *Training*

It takes a number of years for an educational television agency to develop the skilled manpower necessary for striking a balance between the requirements of TV production and the objectives of the educators. There is dearth of trained manpower in Pakistan. Dependence on advanced countries for training in media techniques, particularly for producing educational programmes, is great. The training system needs to be institutionalised as an ongoing component of the media.

#### **Conclusion**

Many countries all over the world, especially those which are more primitive in their technological development, are relying more and

more on ETV to help eradicate illiteracy and to train their people quickly and efficiently Pakistan needs an educational channel to overcome much of the inaccessible problems. Educational television is bound to serve the people in that it represents another teacher in the team of teachers. It brings amazing experiences and change in the classroom ordinarily not possible.

Some openly accuse the mass media, and television in particular, of destroying the family, children's education, any form of leisure worthy of man, and communication between people. Many millions, however, all over the globe make use of the learning potentials of television. Particularly, the campaign against illiteracy has changed the very complexion of developing society.

#### **Note**

The assistance and briefing of Mr. Nisar Hussain, Director, Educational Television Division, Pakistan Television Corporation, is thankfully acknowledged.

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## De-Schooling the Teaching of Reading

Theodore H. MacDonald

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### Introduction

In November 1992 the author formally completed a preliminary study based on the proposition that the most effective way of teaching young children to read would be to instruct their parents in how to go about it and then leave it up to them! Not only was the proposition amply supported by the data obtained, but the author argues that an important by-product has been the general empowerment of the otherwise socially and economically marginalized adults involved.

Considerable comment has been made in the media over the last two or three years suggesting some kind of a crisis in the teaching of reading in schools. claims made about evidence for a decline in the standards of the teaching of reading, have been countered by equally strident claims for the reverse. Likewise, the reading public have been bombarded with contradictory claims about the efficacy of a whole range of rather exotic sounding descriptions of methodologies used in the teaching of reading: phonics, look-and-say, real books, etc., etc. However, probably the most even handed comment was made by H.M.I. (1991) in a report it published on the matter, a comment which came to several conclusions of which the following are paramount:

1. The actual method used is not as crucial as the need to make sure that phonic instruction be allowed to play a prominent part in it. Given that precondition, any mixture of methods with which the teacher feel comfortable and within which he/she can choose eclectically, will work equally well.

2. Parents who involve themselves in teaching their own children to read, and who regularly spend time reading to their children, usually produce confident readers whatever the school offers. In other words, the home background of the child has a stronger impact on whether or not

he/she becomes a good reader than on teachers' techniques in schools.

If we take these two findings to be true, they are full of implications for socially and culturally disadvantaged parents in our community. It has long been a common assumption, for instance, that cultural deprivation usually breeds true in that parents who themselves lack confidence with respect to printed material, will unavoidably produce children who are not motivated to read because they have been socialized to a set of values in which reading occupies a low profile. Few adults will choose to confront themselves voluntarily with a situation in which they lack confidence or with which they associate feelings of low self-esteem, and this is especially so if such adults are parents of young children. Who wants to look stupid in the presence of one's kids?

### Empowerment Through Literacy

Paulo Freire (1960), Ivan Illich (1964) and others have long recognized that, all other things being equal, literacy is the greatest single factor in conferring empowerment on marginalized adults. Having had extensive experience in the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity in the 1960's running literacy programmes for adults in Northern California and their children, this author came to the conclusion that the cycle of cultural deprivation described above could be addressed in such a way as to confer empowerment on the parents while at the same time inculcating literacy in their children by teaching the parents themselves to teach the children to read.

A primary school (John Keble Memorial School) in the London Borough of Brent agreed to cooperate in the undertaking, and the teaching programme was financed by a research grant from the West London Institute of Higher Education. The teaching of the parents was



conducted in 6 weekly sessions, each of 1 hours duration, held during February and March of 1992.

The children concerned were subdivided into three subjects: Reception, First Year Infants, Second Year Infants, and were tested for their existing literacy levels (using the Gates-Dolch Diagnostic Reading Ability Test) just prior to the parents embarking on teaching them. They were tested again in June, 1992 and were given a final test in mid-November 1992.

The results have been most gratifying. Out of 19 parents (and 22 children) who commenced the programme, only one parent (and 2 children) dropped out along the way. When the test results gained by these children were compared with results of the same test taken by a control group of children whose parents had not been taught how to teach reading, the scores were significantly different in favour of the group whose parents had received instruction.

### The Parents

Without exception, all of the parents involved were single parents, all but one belonging to ethnic minorities, and none had completed secondary schooling. One had confided to the author that she could not read and write herself and had asked if she could come because 4 of the 6 sessions were going to involve direct work with the children themselves. She was worried about her two youngsters (aged 6 and 7) as a teacher had told her that they were "failing at reading". The present author assured her that it was impossible for children so young to be failing at anything academic and that she was welcome to attend. She was then concerned that she might be called upon to read aloud in class, but was assured by the author that no parent would be reading aloud in class. It was explained to her that an important part of the strategy would involve parents telling stories (at home) to their children. Ideally this would entail reading to them from a book, but if a parent couldn't do that, listening to a taped story together would be fun.

It must be admitted that this author did not feel too sure about that latter piece of advice, but as it turned out, the mother concerned learned to read as she went through the 6 week programme. Not only has this enabled her to greatly improve her childrens' reading, but she now reads a daily newspaper\* and in an active, participant in the Parents' Association at her childrens' school.

### The Method Used

Those who regularly run adult literacy classes know that heavy concentration on a particular method of decoding is contraindicated (Laubach, F., 1964). However, research done by the author on cognitive processes in young children suggest that with young children the scenario is different. They tend to like to gain power over print as quickly as possible. This means, as far as decoding (reading) is concerned, a heavy concentration on phonics at the outset (MacDonald, T. 1988) and as far as encoding (writing) is concerned, acceptance of any spelling of a word that is decodable by the reader as the word intended. This produces eager and highly enthusiastic readers who are unrestrained in their writing by worries about conventional spelling and the other niceties of written English!

Therefore, the six-week programme was set up in such a way as to teach the parents to teach their children the alphabet, conventional to letter-sound bondings, liaisons and phonemes (sh, th, ch, oi, etc). The psychological advantages of such an approach as far as children are concerned has been well-established (Chall, J: 1986; Resnick, L. & Weaver P.: 1979) but what exactly its impact would be when mediated through adults who, in general, held themselves in low esteem was another matter.

Positive aspects of such an approach quickly became evident. Adults who are unsure of themselves academically do not respond well to general concepts involving a heavy investment of personal interpretation (Gaff, G.: 1968). By contrast, the instructions relating to alphabetics and phonics are unambiguous and direct. Parents so instructed responded with increasing

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*"The cycle of cultural deprivation described above could be addressed by teaching the parents themselves to teach the children to read."*

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confidence in transmitting it to their children. At the end of each session, a discussion period was set aside. The author had assumed that this would largely be devoted to questions of the "How do you teach it?" variety. Pleasingly, this was not so. Most parents instead contributed with anecdotal material about their own children and about cunning strategies conceived of by themselves to expedite their childrens' learning. This became an increasingly dominant feature of the discussion sessions as the weeks went by.

By the fourth week of instruction, the parents generally had developed sufficient confidence in themselves as teachers to cope with more ambiguous areas of reading - approaches to non-phonetic situations, the acquisition of a word bank, the role of "grammar", etc. The author was also heartened to notice the increasingly large number of parents who were mentioning ideas they had read in other books and/or magazine articles.

At the end of the sessions, considerable pressure was put on this author by the participants to continue the weekly meetings as a discussion forum/reading clinic. Unfortunately, other professional commitments made this impossible. It was suggested to the parents that they organize such a group themselves, possibly linking it with an input by one or more of the school's teachers after hours. As of the present, nothing along this line has eventuated.

However, as already noted, when the final testing was carried out on the children (November 12 and 13), the results were statistically significant in favour of the initiative. This was, of course, a full 8 months after the final formal instruction session with the parents and with the school summer vacation having intervened! What impressed this author even more were the comments made by those parents who contacted the author after the final testing, to the effect that they had themselves developed their own expertise in such mechanical aspects of literacy as spelling and grammar through mediating the lessons to their children, and that they were now reading books for pleasure.

## Conclusion

Empowerment of socially and economically marginalized adults can be greatly enhanced by involving them directly as partners in the schooling of their own children. The author has established empirical evidence to the effect that this can be achieved with respect to literacy studies and is at present engaged on preliminary investigations to ascertain the extent to which the same might apply to numeracy studies.

The author would be happy to share details of how to go about organizing a programme such as that described in this paper. For such purposes, he is best contacted at home at 081 891 0128, after 8.00 pm.

## Note

\* The Daily Mail

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# The Quest for the Black Heroine - is 'Anti-Racist' Enough for Black girls?

Frances Fletcher

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## Introduction

Rather than hide behind use of the supposedly more objective third person, I would like to commence my argument by acknowledging that I am writing from a "situated perspective" (Haraway; in Bonner, Goodman (eds.) 1992, p8) with a multiplicity of 'ways of seeing' myself in relation to culture and representation (Berger; Bonner, Goodman (ed.) 1992, p6). Thus to 'position' myself I list a number of factors, in no one fixed order of importance. My formal education to date is post graduate level, I am an aspiring writer of children's books, am female, would call myself heterosexual (in terms of sexual practice), am Black and unreservedly feminist.

In this paper I will argue that the images and motifs in folk/fairy tales marginalize and exclude Black girls twice over - by fact of race and by fact of gender. Firstly, via race they are situated in a position of negative-oppositional-value in relation to White girls. In the genre of fantasy and myth there is a dichotomy within the depiction of the 'feminine', as good OR bad. My argument is that, of the proffered images, the good 'feminine' - through physical description alone - excludes Black females and furthermore, owing to their negative portrayals the only reflection to be found is in the portrayal of the bad 'feminine', the wicked witch figure. Secondly, via gender Black girls are placed in a position of negative-oppositional-value in relation to Black boys. The hero, positive and active, is defined as masculine and male, thus excluding females. Therefore I maintain that anti-racist material lacking an anti-sexist bias, in terms of representation, provides positive images for Black boys only. This point I will illustrate by summarising my findings about 'West Indian Folk-Tales' (S.A.T.S. reading list, level 4, key stage 1).

## In or Out, Use of Difference and Oppositional Value

Feminist theorist Bell Hooks asserts that our present way of thinking utilizes difference in a manner that is "the central ideological component of all systems of domination in Western Society"; a thought process she names Either/Or Dichotomous Thinking (Hooks; in Collins 1990

p68). Thus difference is the basis for categorisation (Keller 1985) and "the terms in the dichotomies black/white (Richards 1980; Irele 1983), male/female (Einstein 1983), ... subject/object (Halpin 1989), gain meaning only in relation to their counterparts." (Collins, 1990 p69) Accordingly, the only relationship is that in which the defined 'norm' is "inherently opposed to its 'other'". Thus within the category of race, the defined norm is White, the 'other'=Black; within the category of gender, the defined norm is male, 'other'=female. This pattern is also visible within the construct of gender, whereby reality is typified into a bipolarity of femininity and masculinity, pretending a complementarity similar to "day-night, ying-yang, cold-hot, positive-negative". However as Nevarro et al. summarise; "Androcentric thought has maintained the idea of the superiority of the male over the female." (1991, p16) In a world divided into Public/Private spheres, women are assigned to the private-domestic sphere and anything feminine or feminized - such as emotions, as I will illustrate in 'Gendering the Emotion' - is accorded negative value.

This assignation of negative-oppositional-value is achieved via the process of objectification, occurring via, and essential to, this dichotomous utilization of difference. Cliff (in Bonner, Goodman 1992, p141) outlines; "through objectification - the process by which people are dehumanized, made ghostlike, given the status of Other - an image created by the oppressor replaces the actual being. The actual being is then denied speech; denied self-definition, self-realization; and over-arching all this, denied self-hood - which is after all the point of objectification." Applying this idea to representation and portrayal in literature, "As subjects, people have the right to define their own reality, establish their own identities, name their history ... As objects, one's reality is defined by others, one's identity created by others, one's history named only in ways that define one's relationship to those who are subject". (Hooks; in Collins 1990, p70) Furthermore, this false image is held up as a true reflection - as mirror for the object and as measure for the subject.



In Literature, both Black people and White women have been objectified. However, as Cliff stresses, "Black Women have been doubly objectified - as black, as women, under a white supremacy, under patriarchy." (in Bonner, Goodman, 1992, p142) They are furthermore objectified by White women and Black men and subsumed within the relevant group - for instance in terms of words and images, 'Women' implies white and 'Black' implies males. Cliff concludes that it is "the task of black women artists to transform this objectification: to become the subject rejecting the object and revealing the real experience of being." Focusing upon contemporary women's writing, we can now say that "it is no longer necessary to read between the lines in order to determine what a female's character's name is, what she is like or what she might be thinking." (Bonner, Goodman (eds) 1992, p6) Women have exposed and disputed male myth about their lives by writing about their reality. More politically, questioning and unmasking of stereotypes has shattered false images. As Goodman indicates, "Creating unstereotypical images of women in fiction is a challenge for male as well as female writers. Yet this challenge has been taken up primarily by women writers, and most powerfully by feminist writers." (p79) This process for Black women, delayed somewhat, has begun to happen with the recent admittance of Black women writers into the world of publishing. However, I maintain that in general, popular children's literature has few Black heroines. 'Every day life' stories portraying Black characters exist, but these do not contradict 'feminine' stereotypes. Furthermore the active heroines - bold rescuing princesses, eccentric rather than evil witches, adventurous pirate mothers - are White. Through delineation of the norm and the negative-oppositional positioning of Black females; non-appearance, non-reflection is non-inclusion - is exclusion.

### **Sexism in Literature - Miss Take or Misrepresentation?**

The "marginalization and suppression" of female voices, hence female reality, is facilitated through the inscription of "gendered power relations" in grammatical practices. For example, despite historical and psychological research (Miller and Swift; in Bonner, Goodman (eds) 1992, p8), refuting claims of "an ancient rule of English grammar" or that "everybody knows he includes she in generalizations"; the tendency for the masculine to subsume the feminine - as in usage

of "he, his and him to refer to any unspecified or hypothetical person ... female or male" - continues. Additionally the maintenance of a "standard ordering of gendered words" - male/female, he/she, man/woman, Mr/Miss - not appearing to have an alphabetical explanation, would seem to be an expression of gendered power. As covert means they should not be ignored, as they function to underlie and reinforce the overt sexist images they describe.

Carby proposes that the objective of stereotypes is "not to reflect or represent a reality but to function as a disguise, or mystification, of objective social relations (1987,22). These controlling images are designed to make racism, sexism and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life." (Carby; in Collins 1990 p68) Books present more than just a story. Stone (1983, p8) maintains that "Children's books play an important part in the process of sex role socialization (the acquisition of gender identity), influencing children's views of themselves as female or male." Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is defined, options are outlined and more importantly "to which sex they are available." Varillas maintains that stereotypical representation has direct results whereby children from a very early age are "induced into attributing mythical qualities to boys and to devalue girls and anything considered feminine." As she points out, boys are constricted, "however girls are more negatively affected by these stereotypes as they are presented as the 'inferior sex'". More limitations are imposed, "restricting their autonomy, their creativity, their autoesteem and sense of security, reducing their professional and social aspirations." (p99) O'Connor argues that furthermore, the stereotypical images of women in fairy tales are a contributing element to females' negative and stereotypical views of ourselves and limited definitions of our identities and roles. "Between Snow White and her heroic prince, our two great fictions, we never did have much of a chance. At some point the great divide took place: they (the boys) dreamed of mounting the great steed and buying Snow White from the dwarfs; we (the girls) aspired to become that object of every necrophiliac's lust, the innocent victimized Sleeping Beauty, beauteous lumps of ultimate sleeping good." (Dworkin; in O'Connor 1989, p130). But additional to the factor of gender, are social class, culture and ethnicity; "a child's self image ... can also be shaped by the child's perception of how her or his ethnic group is



regarded and treated by others"(ILEA Inspectorate 1981, p12). Thus my position must be dubious when, in seeking reflection, I find no match in the portrayal of either Snow White or the heroic prince.

### **Gendering Emotion - Who is Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?**

Focusing on some "fundamental" emotions - "Love, Friendship, Fear, Passion and the Personal Ideal" - Nevarro et al. analyse the positioning of women, arguing that the polarisation of emotions, valuing of attributes, leads to a "determined way of being", and that education of the emotion is all about conformity. "The world of emotional feeling, despite its universality does not have the same significance for women as for men."(Nevarro, Rodes (eds) 1991, p15)

Thus in Love and in Passion, woman is generally the object, with little room for expression of as subject. "She has been educated in the idea that love gives meaning to life and resolves the necessity of security and union." Positioning of Woman and Love is - submission - dependency - subordination - renunciation of her self. Her ways to Love are through: - beauty - seduction - perfection, in femininity - and waiting. Underlying is the concept of asexuality; the notion of "female sexuality as reproduction", thus for women, it is more important to give than to receive pleasure. Two representations of passion are suggested, that of "suffering" - through an excess of emotionality or that of "destiny" - through the essentiality and constancy, to the point of centrality, of love in women's lives. "Two archetypes of women exist, created by the masculine imagination: Marla and Eve, the good and the bad, the saint and the sinner." Marla is allowed the passion for her children or for noble, patriotic or humanitarian causes. Eve's passion in contrast is an expression of the capacity of woman for perversion and evil, related to "the frivolity, lewdness and selfishness, characteristic of the 'weaker' sex". Powerful and ambitious, she is also "the courtesan, the whore, depraved and scheming". In keeping with this dichotomy, "A demarcated space exists for the woman who dares to be Eve, the boundaries of which no Marla would dare to occupy."

Female Friendship has only recently been allowed similar status with romantic (hetero)sexual relationships, generally associated with kinship, in keeping with her confinement to the private sphere.

"Fear has been considered as a natural component of the feminine, of woman, and faced

with determined fears she is not allowed the facility of overcoming them which may even reinforce them." In absolute contrast, "Fear as an expression of weakness or insecurity does not form part of the male emotional education." Three specific themes are associated with females: Fear of Solitude - Fear of Independence - Fear of Triumph.

Finally the Personal Ideal. The female version has been centred around Biological and Social Maternity, the Family, and the Spouse, attending and servicing of. "The personal ideal for women has been in function for others. Her self-realisation arrives through her spouse: class, social position, standard of life etc". Thus in general, with the exception of fear, males act out the emotions, with females depicted as the object of these actions.

### **Fantastical Notions of Femininity**

Female (and male) emotionality thus delineated, easily facilitates a restriction of behaviour and roles. Describing female acculturation through the fairy tale, Lieberman identifies two fundamental conventions, that of "the special destiny of the youngest child" in families of same sex siblings, and the focus on "beauty as a girl's most ... perhaps her only valuable asset", thus the youngest and prettiest is singled out, designated for reward, even if preceded by punishment. O'Connor outlines several motifs as likely to generate "collusion" in females towards our subordination and objectification: - Adult female malevolence, especially to other females - Beauty, passivity and victimisation as defining characteristics of young females - The adult male as rescuer and protector - The redemptive power of a woman's love for a man, even if given in obedience to a father - The saving power of domestic work for women (particularly when not beautiful or not young).

"Stories reflect an intensively competitive spirit", frequently about contests, with one prize and one winner. "Girls win the prize if they are the fairest of them all; boys win if they are bold, active, and lucky." 'Heroines' are chosen for their beauty and not for anything they do, "they seem to exist passively until they are seen by the hero, or described to him." An examination of the best-known stories shows that "active resourceful girls are in fact rare; most of the 'heroines' are passive, submissive, and helpless"; behaviour suggested and rewarded by the action of such stories. However, many females are not merely passive they are "victims and even martyrs as well". Victimized girls are "invariably rescued and rewarded, indeed glorified, children learn that



suffering goodness can afford to remain meek, and need not and perhaps should not strive to defend itself"(p193). Lieberman suggests that loneliness and suffering are sentimentalized and made an integral part of the glamour - "the girl in tears is invariably the heroine ... women in distress are interesting". Moreover, the resolution of any situation is according to gender, females are rescued, males rescue.

"Marriage is the fulcrum and the major event of nearly every fairy tale; it is the reward for girls, or sometimes their punishment." Boys get power as well as a pretty wife, the princess being part of a package deal including a percentage of a kingdom. "The system of rewards in fairy tales then (for girls), equates these three factors: being beautiful, being chosen, and getting rich." An intense focus on courtship, reveals it as "magnified into the most important and exciting part of a girl's life".

Women and power present a familiar dichotomy. According to Lieberman the good fairies "have gender only in a technical sense". Not human, asexual and often old, they are "not examples of powerful women ... they do not provide meaningful alternatives to the stereotype of the younger passive heroine." A significant point Lieberman raises, is that there are rarely examples of "a crossed-pattern, that is of plain but good tempered girls". The other side of the dichotomy shows that "Powerful, bad, older women appear to outnumber powerful, good ones ... being ill-favoured is corollary to being ill-natured ... Whether human or extra-human, those women who are either partially or thoroughly evil are generally shown as active, ambitious, strong-willed and, most often ugly." It therefore comes as no surprise that they are envious of any woman more beautiful than themselves. "Being powerful is mainly associated with being unwomanly. The moral value of activity thus becomes sex-linked."

### **Images of Black Women Beyond the Looking Glass**

An examination of portrayal of Black womanhood gives an indication of where resemblances - within defined femininity - might be found. Black women are depicted least negatively, as earth mother, or at the worst, as the antithesis of femininity/womanhood. Collins details four basic stereotypes - the mammy, matriarch, welfare recipient, and hot momma - the essence of which I would argue, is applied to non-white females in the U.K., with women of

African descent holding the absolute negative position. All function to "transmit messages about Black women's sexuality, fertility and roles in the political economy". She points to the use of the 'cult of true womanhood' as a means of ensuring the continuance of Black and White women in the different roles and material circumstances assigned to them. "According to the cult of true womanhood, 'true' women possessed four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Elite white women and those of the emerging middle class were encouraged to aspire to these virtues". In contrast Black women encountered a different set of controlling images, "the black female was depicted by whites as an amazon because they saw her ability to endure hardships no LADY was supposedly capable of enduring as a sign that she possessed an animalistic sub-human strength." (Hooks; in Mills 1991, p7) Thus the dichotomy of mistress/slave extends into lady/woman, good/bad mother, feminine/non-feminine, with all the associated social and sexual connotations.

### **Typecasting the Wicked Witch**

The analogy between the dichotomy of Black and White women in actuality, and bad and good females in fairy tales, is outstanding. On the one hand we have the Princess, the Good Fairy - all that is bright, light, desirable and feminine in a woman. On the other, is the Wicked Step-Mother, the Witch - all that is dismal, dark, difficult, non-desirable and non-feminine in a woman. The dichotomy is delineated via physical description, behavioural and functional association. Beauty, in actuality and fantasy, is that ideal of "blue eyed, blond, thin, white women". Black women are not included in this definition. Furthermore Collins argues that 'beautiful' cannot be defined - in the way we presently use difference - without 'ugly', 'the Other'. Thus not only are Black females omitted in such descriptions, they are propelled to the position of negative-opposition. In fairy tales, femininity and goodness are associated with beauty, hence further exclusion. In this way Black females are described-out of being a princess or fairy.

In terms of positioning Black women as negative norm, Collins highlights Gilkes' analysis of the utilization of the otherness of Black women as counter-ideology. Gilkes pinpoints the emergence of the Black matriarchal image as coinciding with the beginnings of a united Black and Feminist challenge to American Patriarchy. "The image of



dangerous Black women who were also deviant castrating mothers divided the Black community at a critical period in the Black liberation struggle and created a wider gap between the worlds of Black and white women at a critical period in women's history (1983a, 297)." (Gilkes; in Collins, 1990, p76) Collins points to the way that "the public depiction of Black women as unfeminine, castrating matriarchs" was utilized as a powerful symbol for both Black and White women, of what can go wrong if white patriarchal power is challenged; "Aggressive, assertive women are penalized - they are abandoned by their men, end up impoverished, and are stigmatized as being unfeminine." (p75) Even if the Wicked Witch is not coloured Black, she is 'blackened' through negative connotation. Attributes such as independence and ambition, positive in male form are castigated in the female, thus the Black Matriarch is negative. Thus through positioning the Black female is again unable to see herself in images of the good feminine, but in terms of utilization as negative norm, the resemblance to the bad feminine figure in fairy tales is striking.

### West Indian folk tales - what are they telling us?

My investigative framework was based on a compilation of O'Connor's motifs and Stones' list of 'Questions To Ask About Children's Books' (Stones 1983, p15-21) as an aide to recognizing the 'manifestations of sexism in children's books'. One aspect that has been omitted here, is that of accompanying illustrations. The headings that I selected - I focus only females - are that of in/visibility, use of language, character presentation, images of females, female activities and work. For the purposes of analysis two obvious groups were those of Folklore and Anansi, the first consisting of seven stories offering mythical explanations as to how things came to be. The second feature Anansi (the Spider Man) as the central character.

To summarise the Folklore stories: females are less visible, play minor parts, are incidental to a scene, but fulfil stereotypically 'feminine' roles. My favourite example occurs in 'The Coomacka-Tree'; in response to the oldest (male) Carib's observation on the state of the earth, 'A young Carib girl, combing her long black hair, pointed to the earth and said, "It seems to get duller and duller. What the earth needs is a good

polishing."' The worlds are male-centred and heterosexual, non-appearance of females serves to reinforce masculine stereotypes of macho marvel and muscle. In 'The Crested Curassow', when the 'animals' are getting together to elect a leader, we soon learn that they are exclusively male. In 'Irraweka Mischief Maker', the named sex is male; 'The birds chirruped and sang to each other, the baboon roared to his mate, the parrot screeched and laughed in his own language, the wild cow Abeyu lowed, the wild pig Mapuri grunted, the jaguar snarled and the wise owl hooted as he flew through the dusk on flapping wings.' Through this practice it is easy to assume the same of the non-sexed animals. Fuller description of females is to demonstrate fallibility or inferiority. In 'The Jaguar and the Crested Curassow'; 'Kikushie's mate lived with him. One night he said to her: "You go hunting tonight. I am tired. But do you know where to go? ... "I'll do my best," said Kikushie's mate, and she bounded away into the forest. She did not come back. She was not as cunning a hunter as Kikushie, nor was she as careful.'

In 'The Warau People Discover the Earth', females perform appropriate tasks, 'For many weeks the Warau girls and women picked cotton ... wove it into a rope ladder ... This the men lowered through the deep hole ... at the first trial it was too short. The women picked more cotton ...

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'feminine' roles."*

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At the third trial it touched the trees in the forest far below.' However the masculine prevails when important discoveries are made, 'Each man took cuttings from the branches ... so, to this day, every Carib has food close to his dwelling. In contrast, the

origins of rain are inglorious; 'Among the Warau people there was one only, a woman named Rainstorm, who did not like the earth ... Because she often wept her friends called her Rainstorm ... had grown fat on earth ... climbing through the hole she stuck fast.'

Less amusing are the themes in 'Why Women Won't Listen'. In this story the father is the authority figure, the mother deferring to him in everything. The father places the daughter in a situation of potential danger, which when realised is blamed on the mother. It is the daughter, because of her beauty, that is the problem, not the pestering men; cynically referred to as "people" ... "I am tired of them. We must do something to keep our daughter out of sight." In 'Cat and Dog' the story explains, 'Now Dog hates Cat - for it is on account



of Cat that he has only one suit, the one he is born in and wears until he dies.' Four cats are introduced, but only the two sisters are described in their full gossiping and thieving splendour; 'Sad to say, Finger-Quashy was a thief ... a pretty cat ... So quietly did she move and so respectable did she seem that no one suspected her of stealing.' 'Not even Jack-me-no-Touch knew this, which was strange since Jack-me-no-Touch knew everyone's business. She was an honest cat, but a gossip, spreading tales and whispering stories true and false.' No such description is given about the two brothers and when all are thrown out of Dog's house, fault obviously lies with the sisters.

The Anansi Stories are variations on a theme. Anansi is selfish and sly - you might well think that Finger-Quashy had made a reappearance - neither is he above plotting to put a friend or two into his wife's cooking pot. Yet despite these aspects, there are 13 stories describing good old Anansi's antics as he schemes to get whatever he wants. There are 2 stories in which females make no appearance whatsoever, 9 in which females play minor stereotyped roles and 2 in which females actually share centre-stage with Anansi. There is a total of 34 animals - 14 are female: Anansi's wife and Anansi's mother, who cook, clean, and service Anansi. Green Parrot, briefly appears as gossip; Mrs Pig goes to market and Mrs Tiger cooks and shops. Peafowl and Hen are casualties, but Hen reappears as mother. 'Anansi's Old Riding-Horse' features Miss Selina as potential prize and fickle flirt; 'It was difficult to tell which of the two Miss Selina liked best.' Mrs Goat is given a first name, but only so her talkative nature can be described more fully; "But what happened, Selina?" asked Goat. "You tell a story in such a strange way ... but not telling me what happened."

Mancrow is 'a bird in the forest that put all the world in darkness ... Every animal feared Mancrow, and every man hated her, because she had shut out the light'. This particular story (Mancrow Bird of Darkness) is rich with sexist convention; there are a family of daughters; 'half the treasure in my palace ... and I will give him in marriage the loveliest' and a grandmother, whose grandson 'seeing how hard his grandmother had to work, cooking, washing clothes, and searching for wood' decides to try to kill Mancrow; selfless as any good old female should be, she gives him the last of the money. Even Anansi cannot stop the happy ending, 'Soliday married the King's daughter' and everyone is appropriately rewarded,

hence 'his old grandmother lived in the King's palace'.

Queen Bee, Candlefly, Blackbird and Sea Mammy are tricked by Anansi, owing more to their gullibility rather than Anansi's cunning. Anansi receives no real sanction when exploiting females in a serving role. In 'How Crab Got A Hard Back' the female antagonist is 'an old witch-woman and nobody knew her name. She called herself Old Woman Crim, and although she was very rich she was very mean', thus we know that whatever Anansi does is well deserved. However in situations where there is fear of retribution - the prey is not powerless, not fully a victim - the quarry is male. 'Tiger in the Forest, Anansi in the Web' is an example; 'Anansi, frightened almost out of his wits, climbed up into the top of the house. He lives there safe in his web'. It could be argued, with some validity, that a Tiger is more powerful, more dangerous than a Blackbird. However, it is the continual presentation of less threatening animals as female characters - Mrs. Tiger is the only big animal - that adds to the inconsequential status of females in these stories.

Puss, in 'Mr. Wheeler', actually gets the better of Anansi, neither does he escape unscathed. Ungrateful it may seem, but as reader I ended up feeling that Puss was not the complete heroine of the story. Comparison with 'Born a Monkey, Live a Monkey' explains. Monkey observes Anansi laying a trap and exposes Anansi's wrongdoings, apparently to protect other animals; "Well, Anansi walked up the road whistling and I saw that every animal he met was in danger". Puss also discovers Anansi laying a trap, witnessing the demise of Rat and Peafowl. The disquiet arises when, after having outwitted Anansi, 'Puss picked up the bag with Peafowl and Rat in it and went on her way home'. That her intention is to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is questionable. Her actions appear to be motivated, unlike Monkey, by self-interest and self-gain, and thus her victory over Anansi is diminished.

The stories on a group and individual basis deliver and reinforce messages of female inferiority, subordination, victimization. Females are depicted as appendage; the Good Girl - the passive feminine: pliant, patient, pleasing (preferably pretty) or if depicted as independent, she is the Wicked Woman - the active female: wilful, wasteful and wanton. Anansi receives no such dichotomous categorisation, and neither do the many male animals; Monkey for instance, is



Mischief Maker and life-saver. On the theme of male deference whatever a 'he' does is depicted as more important and more rewarding, be it through exclusion or belittling of females via scripting and assigned roles along severe and restrictive gender guide-lines; thus women 'scrub away the haze and gloom' and men 'burnish the higher ground'. Passive and pathetic, or active and atrocious, these are the images of females - set within a Caribbean context - that all girls and boys reading this book are likely to perceive.

Neither a heroic prince nor Snow White, Black girls need positive representation as much, if not more than any other child. Being represented within a Black context is not enough, they must be positively represented as female as well. The quest for the Black heroine - as princess, as fairy, as adventurer, as non-evil witch - positive, active and beautiful, must begin.

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## Creative thinking: One of the factors to increase creative potential of students of technical higher education institutions

Tatyana Zelenko

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the problems of the introduction of the humanities into the curriculum of technical institutions in Russia which will help the students to cultivate a refined perception of the world.*

### Introduction

The role of science, the most important factor of social progress, has increased exceedingly not only in the development of productive forces and further advancement of social relations but also in the development of natural resources, space exploration, creation of new technologies. But all these achievements are useless *per se* without

humanist comprehension of tendencies in modern science and technology. This means that for a modern engineer it is not enough to be experienced in his or her own field to competently solve the problems which might arise or to be in charge of production.

Based on this concept, a reorganization of technical higher education, which is now taking place in Russia, not only increases the level of general education and special training at technical institutions, but proposes that future engineers should be psychologically trained. It is widely recognized that moral principles of a scientist are within the framework of his science and should help him to be conscious of possible



harm or benefit of social and ecological consequences which might arise as a result of practical application of new technologies. Thus the major problem of technical higher education is the formation of a new type of thinking of future specialists, based on integral understanding of regularities in the development of nature and society; a new thinking which could help our society to achieve a new qualitative state. Hence we come to the conclusion that training of broad-minded specialists demands the introduction of the humanities into the curriculum. The peculiarities of creative work in science are more and more often compared with creative work in art and literature.

### Scientific and artistic thinking

Since F. Bacon and R. Descartes' time people have dreamt of the formulation of new rules and methods, creation of new machines and algorithms to obtain new knowledge, to make new discoveries and inventions. Preoccupation with technical aspects in all spheres of life, which was clearly manifested in the 20th century, influenced all means of cultural relations. In this connection J.K. Galbraith, a famous American economist, even tried to design a model of industrial society.

The disputes about the fates of artistic and scientific creative work in the era of scientific and technical progress have become more intense. In 1959 Charles Snow, a well known English writer, delivered his famous lecture on two cultures in Cambridge, in which he broached the question of the development of scientific knowledge and its interaction with artistic creative work. This lecture was met with great interest because at that time there were many heated arguments on the dilemma: whether science or art should have the leading role in the development of modern society. The major reasoning of the opponents of art was the assertion based on the basic principle of aesthetics: art is the cognition of reality. If this is true then, according to technocrats, the existence of art is justified only by the

undeveloped state of scientific knowledge. With the development of science, the most important field of cognition, there is no necessity for such an antediluvian tool of cognition as art, where there are neither precise experiments nor the logic of the modern scientific researcher.

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that the expansion of science in all spheres of social activity began to be followed by the so called "scientific culture". This led to the illusion that it is the spreading of science and its methods that leads to the solution of all fundamental problems of life and society in various spheres: social and political, spiritual, etc. This point of view gave rise to belief in the absolute importance of scientific culture, and the spiritual life of society was associated with this culture. Gradually an idea of two cultures was formed: traditional humanitarian culture and a new one - modern scientific culture.

During the last three decades there appeared many works both in our country and abroad

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***"Peculiarities of creative work in science are more and more often correlated with creative thinking in art."***

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dedicated to the problems of interaction of scientific and artistic thinking. These works show both the influence of scientific knowledge on art and the great interest of men of art in the problems set up in the

course of scientific and technical progress; the role of sciences which have no direct links with art for art critics is given theoretical ground: the problem of creative work modelling is raised. And it is quite natural that analogies with artistic creative work, experience and traditions of artistic thinking, are used very often to understand and solve the problems of scientific thinking. Peculiarities of creative work in science are more and more often correlated with creative thinking in art. And that is quite clear because art helps to develop the rich imagination, flexibility of thinking, and creative abilities of scientists and engineers which are directly connected with the physiology of the human brain: evolution of left and right cerebral hemispheres. According to the results of many researches which have been carried out for many years, the left cerebral hemisphere in most cases controls speech, logical and mathematical operations. The right cerebral hemisphere



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controls non-speech activities, space orientation, music and painting, emotions and artistic creative work in general. "The two halves of our brain work not like two parallel [parts] duplicating each other mechanically but each of them works in its own mode, processing the incoming information in its own way".<sup>1</sup> The discovery of asymmetry of activity in the cerebral hemispheres gave a powerful stimulus for many interesting researches both in philosophy and psychology and in practical studies connected with medicine and pedagogics.

### **Creative aspects of engineers' work**

The questions of the psychology of creative work - scientific, artistic and technical - have not been solved yet. More mysterious are the ways leading people to the creation of masterpieces of art, great inventions and discoveries changing the appearance of the world; deeds that influence the history of countries and peoples. Creative work - as was asserted in the past and is asserted now - is the domain of the incognizable, "a sacred gift" for elite.

Though every individual act of creative work is characterized by elements of chance and individual uniqueness of the creator, creative work itself, like many other processes of the real world, is of regular character.

Modern scientists came to the conclusion that creative work attributed to the right cerebral hemisphere can be formalized with figurative artistic thinking influencing the left hemisphere of human brain. Considering the creative aspect of the engineer's work, I should like to cite professor Bestuzhev-Lada: "The engineer of today and especially of tomorrow should be not only the specialist in the development of technosphere but also an expert in interrelation of the latter with sociosphere. This knowledge should not be reduced to barest essentials of humanitarian sciences. An engineer of the 21st century should become the leading representative of the intellectual sphere - noosphere. Woe if an ignorant engineer survives and comes into the 21st century. However talented he might be, he would bring so many

troubles to mankind which no science fiction 'antihero' could have done".<sup>2</sup>

### **Creation of scientific and artistic values**

As is well known, engineering activity in its essence is "a cognitive and creative process of material and practical learning of reality". The authors of the book *Science and Engineering* justly write that the work of an engineer cannot be described without revealing its creative aspect. Engineers always were and will remain creators of technologies.

In philosophy the answer to the question of the essence of engineering work is determined by the features characteristic of this kind of activity, namely: an engineer should be capable of applying scientific data to solve practical tasks in his work.

First of all the engineer's work is impossible without a developed skill to think technically, that is he should clearly realize physical relations expressed by symbols, easily change from verbal expressions to their mathematical descriptions; to represent mathematical results as practical objects.

Mathematical creative work and engineering activity as a whole give such fruitful material for analysis that the understanding of scientific and artistic creative work can hardly avoid the specific character of mathematical or technical discovery. Revelation of similar moments in the process of the creation of scientific and artistic values inevitably concerns the questions of aesthetic perception of scientific results, the elegance of certain mathematical constructions and demonstrations, theories created by engineers which led to the construction of various instruments and machines. It was in the 16th century that Kepler proclaimed: "Mathematics is the prototype of the world's beauty", thus reviving a centuries old problem - the problem of the comprehension of the world organized according to the laws of beauty and harmony.

An artist could not have created the theory of relativity, but art brings fantasy to engineers' work, and enriches their imagination. Art teaches to see and feel, it cultivates artistic taste and



refined perception of nature. Besides without figurative thinking one would not be able to realize one's creative scientific, technical, logical and mathematical abilities.

### **Man - computer**

I should like to give an example of an existing interrelation "man - computer". The systems of artificial intellect were supposed to be working on the basis of strictly objective knowledge and logical means, surpassing the intellectual abilities of a man who is incapable of fast calculation, and very often hesitant in his thoughts and actions. The thought that unconscious aspirations, intuition, free will, in short everything that makes us unique in this world, are of no less importance than human intellect from a position of abstract theory of artificial intellect was considered a pitiful attempt to oppose scientific progress. There is no place for personality with its individual features in the concept of artificial intellect. Under the influence of this concept the idea of information organization appeared which implied that it was the information system that should stipulate the user's need for information, and how much information is required to solve the given problem. During the process of the development of intellectual systems it became clear that the person working with the machine should be considered a personality and, according to the theory of personality developed by American scientist M. Polani, should be a compulsory subject since according to modern scientists, it is this theory that is the basis of engineering knowledge. Practice compelled us to consider the user as a personality and not a disciplined android whose inner content is simply a suitable computerized form.

In fact, scientists have encountered one of the paradoxes so often met with in life. One would think that the progress in computerization should have decreased the role of an engineer but it was the development of computer science that led to the belief that the systems are served not by

featureless robots but by personalities who, due to their individualities, acquire knowledge with the help of the information received.

The facts given in this article show the necessity of the formation of a new type of thinking of future engineers or scientific researchers. It is necessary to develop a new concept of bringing humanism to the education of students of technical institutions. It should, on the one hand, provide for the systematized basic knowledge which is the basis for the formation of spiritually rich personality, and on the other hand, it should give freedom of choosing the subjects in line with students' abilities and wishes. This could help to develop their tastes and interests. The combination of the compulsory subjects of the humanities and a wide choice of special subjects could help to carry out this task. This systematic mastering of the humanities will let the students of technical institutions deepen and broaden space and time frameworks of their vision of the world, will help them to better understand the interests of other people and communities and will make it possible for them to develop their personality as the subject of intelligent activity.

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# The Biennial Education Services Book Prize

The WEF Book Award 1992, sponsored by Education Services

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## The Tragic Illusion: Educational Testing

by John Raven

Trillium Press (ISBN 0-89824-523-0) and  
Oxford Psychologists Press  
(ISBN 1-85639-035-7)

*The Tragic Illusion: Educational Testing* addresses one of the key issues in education today: the relevance and reliability of methods of educational testing. We all know that the nature and value of the learner's experience of formal education are dictated by the formal requirements of external assessment. The trick for educationists is to devise systems of assessment which encourage good educational practice, help students to develop confidence in their ability and provide helpful information to parents, learners and employers. Other bodies such as Governments and accrediting bodies have different agendas. They see assessment as a way of regulating what is learned, imposing 'standard' performance and distinguishing between people who do well in assessment and those who do not. In recent years, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, the latter influence has been dominant.

One of the main supports for the 'regulatory' approach to assessment is the belief that it is reliable and effective; one of the main criticisms of the 'developmental' approach is that it can be too impressionistic and lacking in rigour. John Raven's book is particularly valuable in that it draws on a large body of research conducted over the years into the rigour and relevance of testing. His conclusions that 'conventional assessment procedures are unable to give pupils credit for having developed high level competences' deserve the widest circulation amongst those currently engaged in debate on testing in schools and colleges. The effect of these approaches to assessment is to encourage teachers to focus on a narrow and educationally limiting range of activities to the exclusion of activities which will develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities which teachers, parents, pupils and employers say they would like to see developed. In other words, in the name of reliability and

fairness we are distorting and diminishing the learning process.

Raven also addresses the alleged weaknesses of the 'development' model of assessment by exploring ways in which rigour and comparability can be introduced into assessments of individual student's achievements and personal qualities. He reports the outcomes of trials of the model and points the way ahead for further development work and research. Experience to date suggests that it is possible to examine key aspects of educational development previously thought to be unassessable by 'looking inside people's heads and identifying motives, cognitions and feelings'.

The value of Raven's work is that it is rooted in serious and objective research into the whole business of assessment. His book has managed to compress much of this experience into a pocket-sized 108 pages including 10 pages of references. The compression of detail has at times made the book a little difficult to read but the central message comes through loud and clear: if we want to raise the quality of education we should seriously question the effectiveness of current approaches to standardised testing. There is, he suggests, a valid and more appropriate alternative.

### Principles of Education Services

**Education should aim to achieve the fullest possible development of:-**

- \* the innate talents and abilities of every individual;
- \* personal relationships in depth and sincerity;
- \* a sense of responsibility;
- \* the capacity to lead and to cooperate;
- \* a sense of values.

**To achieve these ends, education should:-**

- \* be as efficient, taxing and enjoyable as possible;
- \* regard and respect all young people as persons;
- \* treat young people with thought for their positive qualities and potentialities so that they should in turn learn to regard others similarly;
- \* give high priority to generating concern for improving the environment essential to personal growth;
- \* encourage creative effort.



## Round the World - WEF Section News

Rosemary Crommelin

### Headquarters

In this column last year I referred to the biennial Book Award which is administered by WEF in London, and a prize - donated by Education Services - is given to the book considered to have most contributed to the social purposes of education.

Hoping to bring in an international dimension, we asked Sections to let us have their nomination to the list of books submitted for adjudication, but unfortunately there was no response. Overseas readers of New Era may, however, like to know that the Award was given to *The Tragic Illusion: Educational Testing*, by John Raven (published by Trillium Press, New York and Toronto; and Oxford Psychologists Press, Oxford, UK). Though the subject has been a matter of particular debate here recently, its relevance is far from transitory, and educationists are faced with the need to bring about more acceptable methods of assessment. The author draws on his considerable research to compare the 'regulatory' and 'developmental' approaches to assessment, to question the current ideas and to suggest there is a more appropriate way.

At the June meeting of the Guiding Committee it was proposed that some form of

recognition should be given to the Award, perhaps with a formal presentation and lecture, at a meeting in London during the autumn.

Also at the June meeting, the Committee offered its thanks and congratulations to Norman Graves for his editorship of the Learner Managed Learning conference publication. Its three sections deal with The Practice of Learner Managed Learning; Theoretical Issues and Practical Implications; and Policy Issues. Those who attended the conferences at Avery Hill in London, and at Opava, will welcome this record, and for those who did not, the book offers a very comprehensive view on the ideas and practices of 'active' learning. It is available from Higher Education for Capability, 20 Queen Square, Leeds LS2 8AF, UK, price 13.95, or 10.95 to members of WEF or Higher Education for Capability. Add 1 to the price for postage and packing.

### The Netherlands

The third Learner Managed Learning Conference, organised by the Dutch Section, took place near Amsterdam in April. The conference offered a full, interesting programme which reflected the detailed hard work and planning done by the Dutch Section; many participants

commented on the goodwill generated, and were anxious to keep in touch with WEF. An official report on the conference will be given later.

### Australia - and en route

Reference was made in the last issue to the Chairman's proposed visit to Malaysia and New South Wales: the visits went ahead as planned, and John Stephenson made contact with the new University of Sarawak which was due to open on 1 July. Quotations from the new University's prospectus include a message from the Minister of Education, and statements by the University which broadly reflect principles very similar to those of WEF: "Its (the University's) success will depend upon its ability to foster the total development of the learning student....." and ".....the task is to equip people not with specific time-limited skills but with the fundamental competence and confidence to go on learning and adapting throughout the refinement and application of quite basic knowledge". Finally, "It follows that a desired graduate profile is one that is based on the total development of the individual as an autonomous but cooperative member of society".

John Stephenson has been invited back in October, when



he will look into the possibility of holding the 1996 WEF conference on the island of Borneo.

The primary purpose of the visit to NSW which followed, was to give the George Howie Memorial Lecture, which was attended by about 50 to 60 people, with widespread representation from the Committees in each of the Australian Sections. This made it possible to hold an informal meeting of the Australian Council which John Stephenson was very pleased to be invited to attend. Among Committee members present were Christopher Strong (Tasmania, and Council President), Nick Baikaloff (Queensland), Ruth Rogers (South Australia), Arthur and Rylice Sandell (Victoria) and Yvonne Larsson, Margaret White and Charles Bradley (NSW).

The Council expressed its keen support of the proposed United Nations 50th Anniversary event which we hope will be held in London in 1995, for the Chairman's recognition scheme which would set up a system of awards for good practice in schools, and encouragement for the Board of *New Era in Education* to increase the international flavour of the journal. In this connection Section Secretaries will have received, with the Minutes of the recent Guiding Committee meeting, copies of notes on an informal meeting held in London when the future editorship was discussed, and of a letter from Sneha Shah who, we hope, will take over from

David Turner who has asked to retire from the editorship at the end of the year. The Committee looks forward to receiving comments from Sections. The Australian Council also welcomed the idea of receiving copy by disk, and agreed to explore the possibility of printing locally.

From Tasmania comes news of another Lecture. Professor Richard Bawden, who gave a keynote lecture at the Avery Hill Learner Managed Learning Conference in London in 1990, is to give the Honora Deane Memorial Lecture for WEF in Tasmania this year.

#### USA

Dr Mildred Hapt has let us have a report on the US Section's Annual Conference held last April, and co-sponsored with the Society for Educational Reconstruction. The Conference took place at the College of New Rochelle, New York, with an international theme: Positive Images of Education at Home and Abroad: Turkey, Yemen, Hungary and Russia. She writes: "The presenters were excellent - interesting and informative. By the end of the day we truly had some positive new images of education from at home and abroad to take away with us".

Among the panellists and presenters were Dr Frank Stone, Dr Nasrine Adibe, Dr Dorothy Albanese, Sr St John Delaney, Dr Jean Brogan, Mrs Alice Grant, Mrs Marge Steciak and Genevieve Brechtel. Coordinators, and also

introducing the conference, were Dr Mildred Hapt and Dr Angela Raffel. The Gertrude Langsam Educational Reconstruction Award was presented by Professor Langsam to Jonathan Kozol, author of *Savage Inequalities*.

In his conference presentation Dr Frank Stone spoke of the very interesting and enriching three months he had spent in Turkey following the Connecticut Conference last year. On the evening of the Conference Dr Nasrine Adibe (a past President of the US Section) was honoured by the American University of Beirut Alumni Association of North America at a dinner in the Waldorf Astoria. Our congratulations to Nasrine.

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With sadness the US Section asked us to record the death last autumn of Dr Lucile Lindberg, a long-time member of the New York Chapter of the US Section. Dr Lindberg was a former President of the Society of Professors of Education, a Fulbright Scholar in 1964, and a distinguished speaker world-wide. She lectured in more than 45 countries on early childhood education, published widely, and one of her earliest works, *The Democratic Classroom*, is considered a classic in its field. She retired from Queens College CUNY after 45 years' service, and will be greatly missed by her friends and colleagues.



# Student Withdrawals from Teacher Training

Margaret Sands

### Abstract

*The paper looks at the pattern of student teacher withdrawal for the secondary Postgraduate Certificate in Education course at Nottingham University over the past four year and examines the reasons for the earlier high rate of withdrawal. Withdrawal rates at different times of the academic year are related to time spent in schools by student teachers, and to their subject specialism, and reasons stated by students for their withdrawal are given. It is seen that there are more withdrawals from the shortage subjects of physics, mathematics and modern languages than from other curriculum areas. The Advanced level and degree qualifications of students are given for those who withdraw or fail to compare with those who are successful in completing the course. The gender and age of those who leave are given.*

### Introduction

One of the largest secondary Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses in the UK is at the University of Nottingham. Currently the official intake each year is 260, which includes a high number of students in shortage subjects: 60 scientists, 55 mathematicians and 55 modern linguists. Most of these students stay the whole year, are successful in all their endeavours, leave with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education and go straight into teaching in state schools in the UK. A few students fail to make the grade. However, more fall during the year than fail at the end, as students who sense their own inadequacy in the classroom withdraw from the course.

This paper examines the pattern of student withdrawal over four years, at different times of the year, and in relation to subject specialism and

earlier qualifications, together with students' stated reasons for withdrawal.

### Withdrawals over four years

**Table 1** shows the number of students who withdrew in each of the four academic years 1988 to 1992. The drop out rate of 1988-89 was unusually high and, in the reasons given by students for leaving, showed how issues of pay, low morale in school staff rooms and poor working conditions greatly affected their desire to continue. Teacher morale was low due to the teachers industrial action and unrest of previous years, and was further reduced by the phenomenal pace of change in schools and the curriculum, immediately affecting classroom teachers through the National Curriculum. Student teachers were exposed in schools to a profession reeling from external intervention and change, and suffering from a public image denigrated by the media, one which placed heavy burdens on its shoulders. It was not surprising that some students, faced with a barrage of comment and advice, decided to leave before they invested further time and effort. Indeed, one department in one school all of whose teachers were actively seeking to move out of the profession had successfully persuaded five students to leave in recent years, feeling compelled to advise students to look elsewhere.

By the recession of 1991-92 the situation had changed. The withdrawal rate dropped to 4.4%, only one third of that of four years before. Students thought more than twice before voluntarily going into a job market which they may already have known from personal experience was more than tight.

*Table 1: Withdrawals from the PGCE course over 4 years*

	Students Starting 1 year PGCE course	Withdrawals	%	withdrawals
1988-89	204	25		12.3
1989-90	219	21		9.6
1990-91	224	13		5.8
1991-92	275	12		4.4

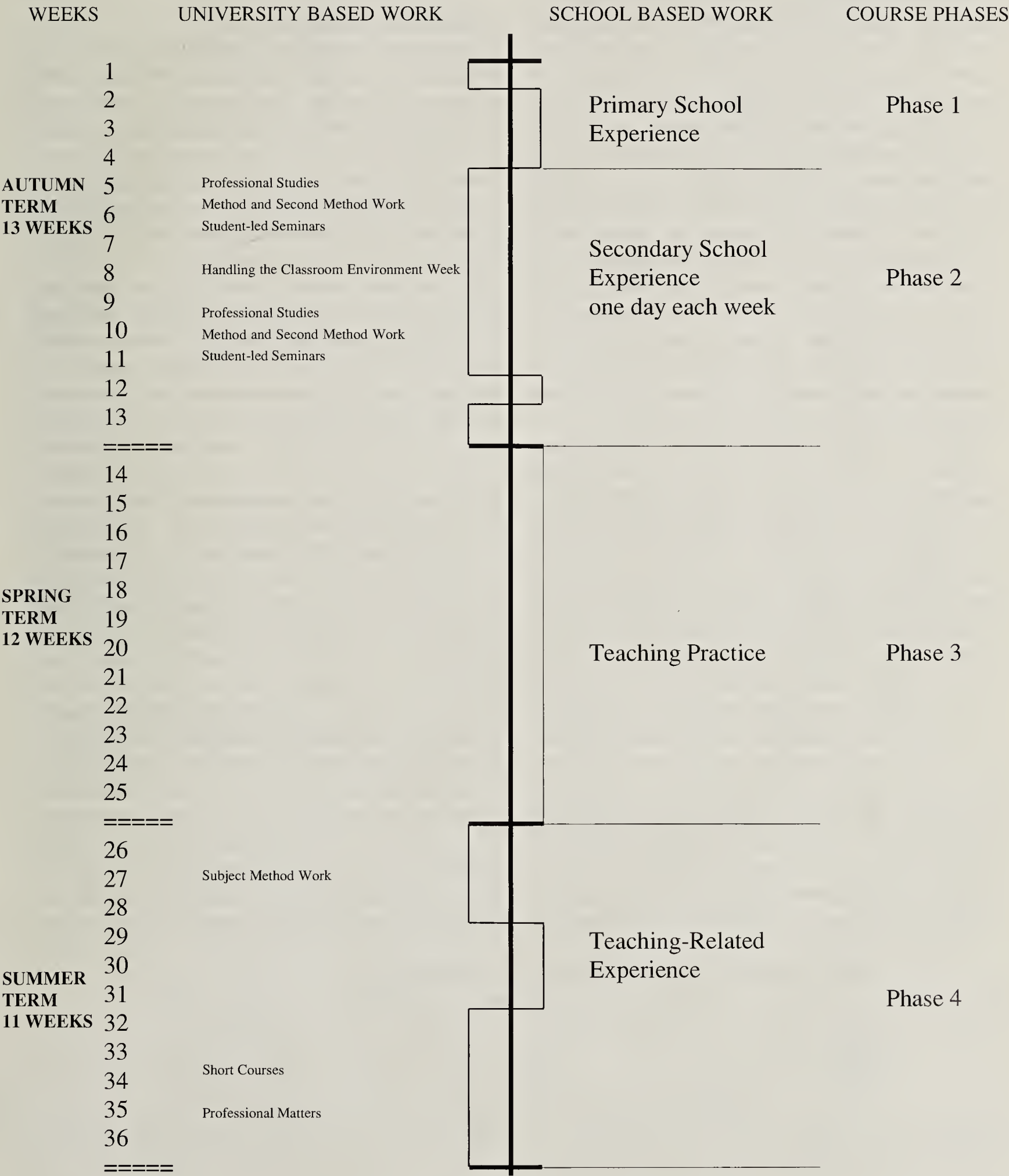


Withdrawals over the academic year

The Nottingham University course contains four periods of time in schools (*Figure 1*). The year begins with a three week supervised period in a primary school in September/October. There, students are thrown into the thick of children,

schools and teachers and-with very few exceptions - delight in the experience. They learn that teaching is about children as well as a subject. And they discover that enthusiasm, commitment, initiative, preparation, good timekeeping, stamina and the ability to get on with colleagues count a great deal.

Figure 1: Outline of the PGCE Course at the University of Nottingham





Through the rest of the autumn term students spend a day a week in a secondary school where they follow a closely supervised sequence of activities, including some class teaching, agreed by the university tutor and the teacher. At the end of term there is an induction block of four days in their teaching practice school, in preparation for their main practice which then occupies the whole of the school's spring term. During this term students teach half to two-thirds of a full teaching timetable and, as far as possible, behave and are treated like members of staff. The summer term contains the fourth school experience: a three-week period in a different secondary school or other educational establishment personally negotiated with their tutor to take account of other needs and interests. Students teach in areas they may have missed out on, such as advanced level with year 12, inner city schools or special needs work, or consolidate and extend their experience in other ways. For example, a group taught prisoners at Norwich prison. Others accompany pupils on field trips, camps or outdoor pursuits, help with curriculum development, theatre sessions or have some other attachment to a school or organisation concerned with education.

**Table 2** gives the number of students withdrawing during each of the three terms of the academic year. It can be seen from **Table 2** that, by the summer term, most students intend to stay the course. They have a successful teaching practice behind them (except for the few who have failed and have to resit). Very few withdraw at this stage, and do so only for personal reasons. A recent example was a physicist with a PhD who, with his wife, was determined that he should teach and settle in this country after many years abroad in petrochemical engineering. All approaches to him by firms in his first two terms had been rejected, but on the first day of the summer term his Local Education Authority announced a cut of 200 teaching posts. By the next day he had accepted a 30,000 job in an oil company and was gone.

It is during the teaching practice in the spring term that the greatest number (60 per cent) of the

year's withdrawals occur. Students leave at a fairly steady rate through the term, with an increase before the external examiners visit at the end of term. Very doubtful ones who, by dint of careful placement and accommodation to their needs, have been persuaded to continue over December and January, show that the staying on was just a temporary period of endurance, and confirm their previous inclinations by withdrawing.

**Reasons for withdrawal**

The greatest number of withdrawals, then, follow exposure to school conditions. What are the reasons given by students for voluntary withdrawal from the classroom, and from a course in which they have already invested up to seven months work and loss of potential earnings?

Most reasons are almost entirely related to the world of teaching as students question their ability for teaching or their commitment to it.

Of those who question their ability, some feel that they are not 'cut out to be a teacher' and that teaching isn't for them. 'I no longer wish to teach', 'I simply do not want to be a teacher'. And those who are more explicit feel that they will never win through, 'lost confidence, can't cope', 'unsuited and having difficulties with most aspects', 'classroom performance not as good as I would wish, particularly in assertiveness, and I haven't the commitment to overcome it', 'lacking in confidence after eight years out of employment looking after my parents, and can't get on top of my classes', 'I enjoy 1:1 relationships but find numbers and discipline beyond me; back to accountancy', 'lack of commitment and enthusiasm', 'my enthusiasm and motivation have all but evaporated', 'I find preparation difficult and assessment frightening', 'happier working with adults', 'my character isn't strong enough, too soft on homework and in class, I'm going with relief'.

For these students, tutors and teachers are usually in agreement, having spent up to ten weeks working with the student, advising, helping and encouraging throughout, but finally reaching the same conclusion. Probing may put the reason

<i>Table 2: Withdrawals from the PGCE course per term</i>				
	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
1988-89	9	14	2	25
1989-90	7	13	1	21
1990-91	8	5	0	13
1991-92	2	10	0	12
Total	26	42	3	71



given by some into a different perspective. One who spoke at length about 'lacking the dedication for teaching' was described by a friend as needing less work and more pay.

Those who find their commitment to the job waning comment on the amount of work, the conditions in schools, the pay, and the image and morale of teachers.

'The volume of work was higher than I expected' (students teach a half timetable or slightly above). 'The amount of preparation, after a full day, kept me up to the early hours, and I'm just not prepared to do that any longer'. 'Disillusioned with the conditions in schools, the amount of paperwork, and the amount of out of school work'. 'I find it far more demanding than I had imagined'. 'My interest is in my subject, not all the extra work teachers have to do'. 'Low morale in schools, and the low pay compared with others who graduated with me'. 'I am quite exhausted'. 'Facilities are poor: no lab techs, have to set up and clear own practicals as well as do own typing and worksheet production, kids have no books, only one computer and overhead projector for the whole department'. 'I have to travel between two schools every day and can't miss the transport, so urgent jobs don't get done at either building'.

Many of this group of students actually find leaving a difficult decision to take. They may be quite good at teaching. They enjoy working with children and may come out of lessons elated with the interactions and work they have been able to do. They get on well with their colleagues in school and are good at their subject. But the total life style indicated above, of working facilities in school, of excess work out of school coupled with the low rewards, finally drives the off.

It is however good to note that, as they go, tribute is often paid to the new and useful skills they have learned during their training year. They find it an intensive year and recognise their own development as it proceeds.

In the first term of the year, as one would expect, the reasons for withdrawal are not all because of teaching. Indeed, for most, the three weeks of primary school experience with which they start the course are very enjoyable and capture their hearts and minds. Many students keep up the contact with their primary school through to Christmas and up to the end of the summer term. Nonetheless, for a few, even after such a brief exposure, it is already clear to them that this is a world into which they should not have ventured, and about half the first term's withdrawals are due

to difficulties experienced in the classroom or a dawning understanding of the demands teaching makes.

Reports from primary school Heads commenting penetratingly on the lack of ideas or enthusiasm, poor timekeeping, inability to listen to advice, the need for reminders, inadequate preparation, lack of commitment, combine with tutors' own understanding of the student and school and point to the need for help or counselling out of the profession. Such students are usually not long before they go on their way.

The remainder of the first term's withdrawals leave for personal reasons: pregnancy, the illness or death of a parent, difficulty in completing a PhD thesis or book in the intensive conditions of teacher training, absence of a loved one, return to the previous job, delayed job offer, poverty, homesickness. A very few leave very early: a physics graduate left at the end of the first day saying that he had 'given it a whirl' and that was it.

All other students stay the course and most of them retain, at least throughout their training, their commitment to and joy in teaching. But running through the four years of this enquiry are the constant stresses which cause some to go, are commented on by all, but which cannot really be appreciated until student teachers move into full time teaching and experience the job in all its aspects. For some, the exhaustion, the preparation and marking during evenings and weekends, the other jobs and additional duties they are then called upon to do reinforce earlier feelings and their departure contributes to the outflow of teachers. This loss of qualified teachers is vastly more important to the teaching profession than is withdrawal during the training course.

About 88 per cent of the students from Nottingham University PGCE course are teaching in the UK by September or shortly after obtaining their PGCE. Some six per cent choose to teach abroad first. A further four per cent go into other jobs, in some cases while waiting for a suitable teaching vacancy, and a few proceed to further full-time study. Of the 88 per cent, how many stay in teaching, and for how long? What is the length of life in school of a newly trained teacher, and which reasons given by their student colleagues finally cause retreat from the profession?

### **Withdrawals by subject**

Nottingham University students are recruited into ten subject areas. The enquiry looked at the



Table 3: Withdrawals from the PGCE course by subject

	Eng	Drama	ML	Class	Hist	Geog	Biol	Phys	Chem	Maths	Total
Autumn											
1988-89	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	9
1989-90	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	7
1990-91	2	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	8
1991-92	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	5	0	1	5	3	2	3	1	2	4	26
Spring											
1988-89	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	5	14
1989-90	1	0	7	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	13
1990-91	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
1991-92	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	3	10
Total	4	0	9	1	3	2	3	5	2	13	42
Summer											
1988-89	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
1989-90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
1990-91	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1991-92	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Total											
1988-89	5	0	2	1	0	1	3	3	2	8	25
1989-90	1	0	7	3	3	1	2	1	0	3	21
1990-91	3	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	3	13
1991-92	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	2	4	12
Total	9	0	11	6	6	4	6	7	4	18	71
Started	165	45	115	28	104	84	91	50	74	129	
% W'drawn		5.5	0	9.6	21.4	5.8	4.8	6.6	14	5.4	13.95

pattern of dropout within each of these. *Table 3* shows the figures over four years.

It is easy to see that it is the shortage subjects of physics, mathematics and modern languages which lose the most students. (Classics is odd: one person who returned the year after withdrawing accounts for two of the six as she withdrew again, and five of the six left in the first term for personal reasons).

Of the shortage subjects physics and mathematics top the list with a 14 per cent withdrawal of those who started, and modern languages loses nearly 10 per cent. It is also these same shortage subjects which have a much higher withdrawal rate in the teaching practice term, especially when compared with other subjects. The reasons for going are those given above.

The students who go make it quite clear, either at their final interview or on contacting their tutors later, that they have a fairly sure idea of the job market outside teaching and are not prepared to put up with a job where they have difficulties in coping or the working conditions are not as good as elsewhere. It may be that those in shortage subjects are in part encouraged to leave because of the job

opportunities open to them. The others perhaps stick at teaching because the possibilities outside are fewer. Certainly, for such well qualified people, particularly in sought after subject areas, with their skills and experience extended by participation on at least part of a teacher training course, finding employment seems to be no problem. A few have a job waiting for them, others walk straight into something such as computing, maybe at twice the salary.

Selection and qualifications

The degree and Advanced level qualifications of the Nottingham University PGCE students are good. An analysis of the Advanced level grades of all students reveals that classics, physics and mathematics in that order head the list, with modern languages being sixth. The average Advanced level score is 26.6 for classics, 26.2 for physics, 26.0 for mathematics, 20.4 for modern languages. (With A = 10, a score of 26 is thus equal to, say, ABB or AAC, and 20 to BCC).

With regard to degree classifications, over these four years, between 81 per cent and 87 per cent (1988) of the entry to the PGCE course have first



or second class honours degrees. The breakdown for 1991 is typical: 4.4 per cent had first class degrees, 40.2 per cent had a 2:1, and 38.4 per cent had a 2:2. The remaining 17 per cent had third class honours or unclassified degrees or degree equivalent, some from abroad. In addition, 9.5 per cent of the 1991 students had a higher degree.

It is interesting to look at the academic qualifications of those withdrawing. Of the twelve students of the 1991 entry who left, ten had 2:1 or 2:2 degrees, and two had pass degrees. Their mean Advanced level score was 20.6. One had a masters degree and one was half way through a PhD.

With backgrounds such as these it is difficult to argue that the students who withdraw are ill-qualified academically, and one cannot point to a relationship between failure to complete the course and poor degree or Advanced level results.

**Sex and age**

The dropout students are almost equally divided between men and women in numbers. The percentages however give a higher figure (8.6 per cent) for men than for women (5.9 per cent). With regard to age the dropout is low for those under 25 years (2.7 per cent), rising to just over 8 per cent of students aged 25 to 39, and to 17 per cent of those over 40. The indication so far is, therefore, that those who have already had employment other than teaching may find the prospect of returning to something similar more attractive than that of staying in schools.

**Failures**

For the same four years, of those who have presented themselves for examination, nineteen students have failed. They are scattered over eight of the ten subjects and no reliable pattern has emerged. *Table 4* shows the data.

The mean Advanced level score for those failing is 16 compared with a course mean of just over 20. Their degree results however are in line with those of other students: sixteen have a good honours degree, three a pass degree, and one has an MA also, suggesting again that academic excellence does not necessarily correlate with teaching ability. Contrary to the general trend, however, there are more men and more students under 24 in the failed group than one would expect: twelve men and seven women, with ten under 24 and three over 40.

**Conclusion**

The evidence here indicates that students who withdraw from a PGCE course do so largely because, one way or another, their experience in schools convinces them that teaching is a job they no longer wish to do. It is not because they are poorly qualified in their own subject, and probably not because of age or gender.

Lawlor has criticised (Lawlor, 1990) PGCE courses because the main method courses seem to be based not on mastering the subject and on subject content, but on other activities, work which is related to teaching skills and an understanding of how to adapt one's subject to children and the classroom. She comments also that, 'assessment does not set out to measure whether the student has mastered the subject sufficiently to teach it confidently'.

Students must have a degree in the relevant subject area of their proposed teaching specialism before being accepted onto a postgraduate training course. With degree and Advanced level qualifications such as those discussed above, one might expect students to have mastered their subject content and not to need further teaching or assessment in it during their training year.

*Table 4: Number of failures of the PGCE course*

	Theory	Practice	Both	Total
1988-89	0	2	0	2
1989-90	3	3	1	7
1990-91	2	3	1	6
1991-92	2	2	0	4
Total	7	17	2	19



Lawlor's conclusion is that, 'instead of putting mastery of the subject at the heart of the [PGCE] course, as the essential foundation for good teaching, the training course demeans the subject to being little more than a peg on which to hang modish educational theory', and that 'one of the principal causes of the shortage of highly qualified teachers is the present system of training. It deters good graduate specialists from entering the profession'.

It is clear from the details given here that postgraduate trainee teachers are very well qualified in their teaching subject area and could be said to have mastered it after Advanced levels, an honours degree and (in nearly 10 per cent of cases) a higher degree. The shortage of highly qualified teachers on the evidence produced here is not related to academic qualifications or lack of subject knowledge but far more to an inability or lack of desire to cope with the classroom, children of all abilities, and the working conditions in schools. Rather than being deterred by the training year from entering the profession, it is regarded as an essential staging post. During the year student teachers discover, by working part time in a number of different schools, at different levels, and with different emphases, with time away from the classroom as well as inside it to learn skills, to discuss, to read and think, whether or not they have the ability and commitment to go to teach permanently. Those who withdraw during the year, regardless of their good previous academic attainment, feel unable to enter the profession. Academic excellence seems not to be related to teaching ability.

Given that involvement in schools and with children in classrooms is a major cause of

dropout from training, students clearly need to experience work in schools before they can know if they wish to continue. Without the immersion of the training year there seems to be little way to ensure this and thus prevent the dropout. At the moment, students are asked at interview to do all they can to see that they obtain some secondary school experience before they come on the course if they do not already have experience of work with children; and all students are expected to spend a week in a primary school near their home before the start of the course, with its focus on Key Stages 1 and 2. Potential students do not have the time or the facilities to engage in anything longer before they join the course, and neither could the schools cope with them. Some dropout is therefore probably inevitable.

By 1994 at the latest the amount of time which students on secondary PGCE courses must spend in schools has to increase from 42 per cent to 67 per cent of the course (DFE 1992). It will be interesting to see if this new requirement affects the withdrawal rate during the course.

## References

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## REVIEWS

### **We are the Original People: The Story of a Development Project in an Adivasi Village in South Gujarat, in India,**

by Marieke Clarke,

Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1991,

257pp, £11.95, ISBN 81-202-0243-0

In the summer of 1976 Marieke Clarke and her husband, Suresh Kumar, spent six weeks living with the Madhujan, an adivasi (tribal) community, in Nougam, a village in South Gujarat. Suresh's intentions were to study a specific development project for the purpose of writing a thesis for a development studies course; Marieke had obtained leave from Oxfam to "collect material on changing food habits".\* *We are the Original People* is based on their experiences during this initial visit, a six months stay in 1977/78 at the invitation of 62 adivasi men and women, a further return visit as observers in 1980 and a brief visit to Nougam by the author in 1986 to look specifically at the changes affecting the village women over the previous decade.

As Marieke states in the preface, the aims of the book are varied: "to describe an intense experience in an Indian village"; "to analyse some of the problems confronting grassroots development workers" and to portray "relations between different groups of men and women: caste Hindus, adivasis and development workers", focusing particularly on the control of resources exerted by upper caste Hindus. As she explains: "the book is written in a variety of styles, because the experience included research and domestic life, public meetings and the study of sociology".

This is a book that should be recommended strongly both to academics embarking on research work in communities in southern countries and to NGO personnel / volunteers participating in community project work. It tackles head-on the motives of - and challenges to - overseas researchers: "What good is all this research doing to do me and my village?" (Kisan, page 3). The author recounts the procedures adopted in Madhopur, a hamlet of Nougam, for gathering household data and the

processes involved in 'popular education' / conscientization, in 'enabling' local people to examine and analyse their community's needs, in leadership training and engendering community self-confidence. Simultaneously, Marieke demonstrates that, despite all efforts to act with almost incredible sensitivity, community projects for beneficial change can be sabotaged at the outset by intense argument and rivalry, both between participant groups and amongst individuals. Happily the text concludes on a positive note; a buffalo milk cooperative enterprise struggling for survival in 1978 was by the time of her visit in 1986 thriving and expanding under local management and was acknowledged by the participants to be largely responsible for their improved living conditions.

Drawing on her own personal experiences, the author illustrates the wide range of problems, both emotional and practical, that can confront those living and working in unfamiliar societies and environments. At the same time her highly personalized account of life in Madhopur contains many examples of incidents and interactions with villagers, often of a humorous nature, causing compensating emotions of intense joy and satisfaction: one prime example occurred towards the end of the couple's stay in 1978 when they were invited to become members of the community by undergoing a traditional wedding ceremony. Marieke's insights and reactions as a white woman from an alien culture and experiencing language communication difficulties are particularly perceptive and interesting.

*We are the Original People* also contains much to enthrall the specialist on India, particularly with regards to social stratification and its ramification in this part of India. The relationships and transactions between different groups, especially between the upper caste Hindus ('the Clever People') and the members of the tribal groups ('the Innocent People'), no less between the Sanskritisers and adivasi traditionalists, are graphically described. The chapter entitled, 'These People Took The Land From Us', records several tragic examples of the unscrupulous methods employed by upper caste



Hindus during the 1899 - 1908 drought to acquire land from adivasi farmers and create indebtedness.

Fascinating to those concerned with the situation of women in southern societies are the chapters relating to tribal women, who, according to the author, enjoy greater autonomy than Hindu women. Whilst many researchers working in the southern continents (including the reviewer!) experience difficulties in talking openly with rural women (because of male interference, women's reluctance for cultural reasons, etc.) Marieke's chapters record some lively, very frank and informative conversations with individuals on a variety of themes, such as the everyday working lives of women, their problems, aspirations and views on marriage and family size.

There is little to criticize adversely in this book. Although there is a map illustrating migration patterns in South Gujarat (page 158), an additional map at the beginning showing the location of the project area would have been useful for the non-specialist. On occasions the rather abrupt change from narrative style to detailed research data may appear somewhat 'uneasy' to the reader but this in no sense detracts from the quality of the text.

\* Marieke Clarke subsequently edited Oxfam's "Recipes from Around the World", 1983.

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**Russia in Darkness: on education and the future,**

by Boris Gershunsky, Caddo Gap Press,  
San Francisco, 1993, 100pp.  
ISBN 1-880192-04-7, price \$12.95.

In essence this short book is an appeal to President Yeltsin (also spelt Yeltcin) to give education a high priority in the reconstruction of Russia on the grounds that nothing of value will be achieved unless the population is educated to value individual achievement and to think things out for itself. The book opens with a Preface by Gerald H. Read, emeritus professor of Comparative Education at Kent State University,

Ohio, USA, who sets the scene by giving a resume of the events which occurred in the USSR following the advent of Gorbachev in 1985 with special reference to education. This is useful and equivalent to what Professor Peter Franks does on Channel 4 television in Britain by giving the background to events currently occurring in Russia.

There follows an open letter to President Yeltcin in which Gershunsky makes his plea for education being given a high priority in development plans for Russia. The author then makes an analysis of Russia's economic and social problems and indicates in what ways the current education system has failed the country. His suggestions for a renovation of educational enterprise include the development of a new philosophy of education, the humanization of education and above all a respect for empirical reality on terms of what actually happens rather than resorting to ideological slogans.

Whilst the general tenor of the message in this book is clear and the analysis of Russia's educational problems ring true, one is left with the uneasy feeling that the author who is himself a product of the Soviet educational system (he was born in 1935), has not entirely emancipated himself from the very influences that he is keen to combat. This is particularly so in the language he uses, though this may be due to his writing in English (no translator is acknowledged in the book). Indeed one becomes conscious that he seems to be writing for the "apparatchiks" or at least those with power in Russia rather than for a foreign audience.

Whilst the general conclusion (that there must be a change of heart among the mass of Russia's teachers so that learning is geared to individual as well as social needs, that the rewards of teaching ought to be commensurate with achievement) is one with which it is possible to concur, there is no concrete programme outlined which could be seen as a way of bringing this desirable state into being. In any case it is difficult to see how the major investment required in education can take place without the national income being substantially raised. Further, as the author realises himself, no such major change in attitude on the part of Russia's teaching force is likely to take place overnight.



The question must be put, will such a book achieve its aim? Not, in my view, unless it is widely read and discussed in Russia.

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**Sugar and Spice?: Bullying in single-sex schools,**

by Celestine Keise, Trentham Books, 1992,  
72 pp. ISBN 0 948080 72 8, price £4.95

In the wake of the Burnage Report (1989), which was related to a racist murder in a high school in Manchester, England, Keise's *Sugar and Spice?* profiles the controversial issue of bullying, highlighting incidents that have at their roots negative racial or gender bias.

She argues that whereas bullying of ten takes the form of name calling and physical intimidation, it differs from bullying based on the gender or race of the victim because it encompasses not only that individual's personal qualities, but stereotypical norms and beliefs for a whole race or sex. Although arguably all incidents of bullying are equally distressing, damaging and unacceptable, Keise argues that bullying on the grounds of gender or race constitutes harassment. Consequently, as harassment is based on wider social, sexist and racist assumptions which disadvantage the majority of the world's population, the embryonic beginnings of such bullying needs to be challenged in order to curb its perpetuation.

Keise carried out research in two ILEA single sex, predominantly white, secondary schools. She aimed to ensure that all members of both schools recognised that bullying was evident in their institution, organized their own strategies in dealing effectively with incidents as they arose and to ultimately empowered victims, onlookers and staff with strategies that challenged and educated the bullies themselves.

As so often happens, bullies in schools largely continue their intimidation tactics uncurbed, because it often occurs in the "No Teacher Zones" and relative privacy of the toilets, the corridors or the playground and victims are

generally too afraid of reprisals to report incidents to those in authority. Indeed these fears in a school that fails to tackle bullying effectively are probably justified as one of the case studies highlights. Pratibha, a Year Ten student, who was frequently bullied, reported a physical attack and as a result the two girls involved were suspended. However, this act of reporting the abuse led to the class "accusing her of suspending the girl and calling her names. It was this that led to the second attack in an empty classroom after school" (p. 41).

Even when bullying is reported, it is all too easy for schools to "punish" the offenders through exclusion and by doing so are able to avoid the real problems inherent in the act, that of perhaps racism, sexism, classism or homophobia. The latter I felt was largely and mistakenly unacknowledged.

Keise's research provided both qualitative and quantitative data that rather grimly exposed a disturbing level of bullying, even in what might be viewed by some as the relative "safety" of a single sex girls school: "some two thirds of all those questioned appear to have been involved in bullying at some time". (p. 51) The book reinforces the need for schools to actively and effectively confront incidents of bullying at all levels, through inservice education of staff, incorporating the issue into the curriculum and raising the pupils' awareness through methods such as action groups and role play.

Ultimately, however, a school must aim to challenge swiftly and positively the dogmatic beliefs that bullying behaviour is frequently based on, rather than the bully as a person. In this way Keise argues, schools will raise attainment by ensuring that every pupil is able to fulfil the criteria necessary for implementation of the National Curriculum in England, which is clearly stated as "confident participation" as a result of "an environment free from harassment". (p. 23)

For a school eager to reappraise its anti-bullying or equal opportunities policy, *Sugar and Spice?* provides some useful guidelines towards the production of such documents, but perhaps more importantly, some excellent practical examples of how to implement them.



After all, we have a duty to ensure all our pupils are able to reach their educational potential, without the impediment of damaging physical and psychological threats.

**Caron Clifford**  
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**Through Whose Eyes? Exploring racism:  
reader, text and context,**

by Beverley Naidoo, Trentham Books,  
England, 1992, 160 pp., ISBN 0 948080 67 1,  
price £10.95

Does education in schools change or shape student attitudes and values? Should it? How does it do this effectively? In controversial areas, such as racism, where young people often have entrenched views, what strategies can be used which don't merely result in confirming these prejudices?

Beverley Naidoo's book attempts to address these sorts of questions. It is based on research which she carried out in an 11-16 voluntary aided Church school in a predominantly white area; the pupils were described as relatively affluent, and the school had no black teachers. The issue of racism was addressed primarily through literature and drama, and was supported by work in personal and social education. The research was conducted alongside members of staff and also involved other visitors, including a well-known black author. The research was deliberately ethnographic, and relied upon subjective judgements rather than statistical evidence. Literature was chosen which contained racism as a key element, including the issues of anti-semitism, apartheid, white working class racism in Britain, and racism during the depression years in the USA.

The project aims were to extend the skill of empathy amongst the students, to challenge racist concepts and perceptions, and to help students develop critical thinking about society. On the face of it, these aims were quite ambitious; it is not clear from the evidence to what extent any of these aims were fulfilled.

The book is a valuable read for anti-racist teachers - however, its conclusions are unsurprising, and its insights are to a large extent already well known. By choosing an ethnographic

approach, the researcher has opened herself up to the criticism that the evidence is merely anecdotal, and reflects more the ethnographers's concerns and values; that the research is merely a tool by which the author can articulate some well known ideas.

As a result, the reader is left with ambiguous evidence, and convincing if unsubstantiated conclusions. Some issues are inadequately addressed - for example, whether literature, which is seen as a vehicle for transforming individuals, is the most appropriate means by which to explore the issue of racism. The author recognizes that by focusing on shifting racist frames of reference, the process can unwittingly serve to ignore structural and institutional forms of oppression (which result in the "marginalising of the broader context of fundamental racist inequality....which is widespread in the dominant community".) Other issues are confusing: for example, the conclusion from survey results and from observations, that girls tend towards the lower non-racist end of a spectrum. One wonders to what extent this is a gender rather than specifically race issue, and to what extent racism is being associated with particular genderised forms of behaviour. Some issues have been covered better elsewhere, for example, the notion that pedagogy, in particular styles of teaching and learning, contribute significantly to outcomes, such as enabling a democratic classroom environment.

The book provides much food for thought, and plenty of ideas for teachers of English, drama and personal and social education who want to address racism and related issues. The post modernist appeal to listen to other voices as a means by which people can begin to understand such things as how racist ideology operates, is a beguiling one. In the context of a school where cultural diversity within the curriculum, anti-racist awareness amongst teachers, and appropriate teaching and learning strategies are not fully developed, such a notion is unlikely to contribute effectively to the dismantling of racism.

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- (a) The primary purpose of education today is to help all of us to grow as self-respecting, sensitive, confident, well-informed, competent and responsible individuals in society and in the world community.
- (b) People develop these qualities when they live in mutually supportive environments where sharing purposes and problems generates friendliness, commitment and cooperation. Schools should aim to be communities of this kind.
- (c) Learners should, as early as possible, take responsibility for the management of their own education in association with and support from others. They should be helped to achieve both local involvement and a global perspective.
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- (d) foster educational contacts between all peoples including people from the third world in order to further international understanding and peace.
- (e) promote education as a lifelong process for all people, regardless of sex, race, beliefs, economic status or abilities.
- (f) encourage cooperative community involvement in clarifying educational goals and undertaking educational programmes.
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## Looking Forwards, Looking Back

With this issue of the *New Era in Education*, I reach the end of five years editing the journal. For the next issue I hand over to Dr. Sneh Shah.

If anyone is inclined to say that it seems like much more than five years, or it seems much less than five years, then I can only say that I agree; to both propositions. There have been moments when editing the journal regularly has seemed a tremendous chore, and the time has seemed long. Equally, there have been times when the time seems to have flown by, and it has been a pleasure to be involved with putting the *New Ear in Education* together.

All of the time, it has felt a privilege to be involved with the tradition of the... And now I am lost for words. The New Education Fellowship is not so new, and has become the World Education Fellowship. *The New Era* has become the *New Era in Education*. And if our political masters in the UK have their way, progressive education and child-centred education are set to become the curse of the age, as they rush to take us "back to basics".

All the same, something has been going on in education for the bulk of this century, something that has made schools better places for children and teachers. It did not start in 1920 with the foundation of the New Education Fellowship, and it has not ended yet. However, the Fellowship, and *The New Era* have been a major contributor.

I have always been conscious, in editing *The New Era in Education*, that the purpose of the journal was to make people, especially teachers, aware of good practice. The journal was founded in the simple faith that if people of good will were shown what was right, they would need very little persuasion to do what is right. That

seems to have been an extraordinarily successful recipe, and now, when many of the central tenets of progressive education are under attack from the New Right, we may be able to draw upon some of the strengths of that tradition.

Handing on the editorship to new hands, it is a good moment to look forwards to the challenges which face education over the next few years. In the industrialised world there is, and has been for some time, a mean-spirited approach to education. In part this can be seen as a response to demographic changes - aging populations are having difficulty financing all the provisions of a welfare state. The shoe pinches everywhere, and education is no exception. This real difficulty has been compounded by an imaginary one; the belief that what the industrialised west needs is more imposed discipline, and less of the "frills", such as peace education, international education, or child-centred learning.

But in other parts of the world, these difficulties look like a local hiccup. Many parts of the developing world do not have aging populations - in Latin America more than half the population is under twenty one, and six to eight years from now two schools will be needed for everyone which exists today. And more than ever, with increasingly available technology, what young people need is the education which will give them flexibility and the ability to control their own development. These are the real challenges which face education.

For those of us in the UK, it will be a tragedy if we are cut off from the international development of education, and left in an isolationist backwater. But for most of the world, it will not matter much one way or the



other, and the key challenges which face education which I have outlined will still have to be confronted.

In this issue of the *New Era in Education*, therefore, I have put together a brief review of some of the traditions of progressive education. I hope that this will show some of the ways in which progressive education can go on into the twenty first century.

In the first place I offer a slice of history of the New Education Fellowship / World Education Fellowship. Recently I have been working on a chapter of a book to be edited in Germany by Professor Hermann R?hrs, The book deals with the international development of progressive education, and my chapter looked at the influence of the New Education Fellowship on legislation. In the process of researching this, I spent some happy hours rummaging through the WEF archives held at London University Institute of Education. The result was the article I offer you here, on the network of people who promoted progressive ideas through the 1920's and 1930's.

Philip Garner, in his piece entitled, "Sucking Eggs Again", reviews his personal experiences of education, and argues that a tradition of good, progressive, child-centred education has not sprung forth from nowhere. Good practice has been around for some time, and we might do well to draw upon the strength of that tradition, rather than try to hide it behind modern jargon.

Pamela Bishop also looks at the modern tip of a well established progressive iceberg in her article, "The Writing of a Policy for Equal

Opportunities in a School of Education - An Evolutionary Process". Again the title emphasises the fact that we are part of a growing tradition.

Also in this journal are reports of activities of WEF sections around the world, including a special report by Daniel Moynihan on the involvement of some of his pupils in an international conference. As we move towards the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, what could be more appropriate.

And finally, in her last issue as Reviews Editor, Sneh Shah has assembled some book reviews which reflect the theme. Appropriately, not all of the books are new, but rather they reflect concerns which have been part of progressive education for a long time.

Here in the UK we have got used to the idea that prominent politicians will periodically launch into an outburst which blames the current state of education upon progressive educationists. I hope that in this issue we can find a positive answer to that accusation; "Yes. Universal compulsory education, education which included all children irrespective of class, creed gender or nationality, education which respected children with special needs, education suited to the development of the individual, education free of lockstep teaching or examination domination. We did that. It will not be undone so easily. But just in case the tide of progressive education can be rolled back, now we're going to do some more."

**David Turner**

World Education Fellowship  
37th International Conference  
"Education for a World Family"  
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to be held near Tokyo, Japan

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# The New Education Fellowship: The Growth of Progressive Education

David Turner

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## Introduction

Over the past few years the government has made a consistent attempt to reform education in the UK. In the 1988 Education Reform Act gave the Secretary of State unprecedented powers, in terms of laying down what should be taught in schools. The main thrust of these innovations has been that schooling has been ruined by progressive educationists, and that by taking the control of the curriculum out of the hands of teachers, and the preparation of teachers out of the hands of university departments of education, we can return to the standards from which we have been seduced.

There are two points on which one might choose to disagree with the case which has been advanced by the government. Most obviously, as progressive educators, members of the WEF will object to the idea that child centred learning, the breaking away from rote learning and lock-step teaching, and the development of education designed to extend the individual represents a lowering of standards. The progressive education movement, of which the WEF has long been a part, has certainly produced changes, but for the most part these have been changes of which we justly feel proud.

Quite apart from that moral judgement, we might simply wonder whether the government's argument does not overstate the influence which progressive education has had. The purpose of this article is to review the network of educators who were involved in the WEF, and to suggest that it was quite as pervasive as is now being suggested. We might like to take heart from the fact that now, at long last, the progressive education movement is being recognised for the major influence it undoubtedly is.

From its start in 1921, and continuing through into the 1950's, the New Education Fellowship functioned as an extraordinary network for the transfer of ideas in progressive education. In fact

the network was so extensive that it brought together educators and administrators from a number of distinct fields and facilitated the direct impact of those ideas onto educational institutions. This cross connection was one of the important features of the Fellowship's role. Through the Fellowship, at least five distinct groups of people were brought together, exchanged and developed ideas, and contributed to the development of progressive education in England.

## An International Network

The first and perhaps most obvious feature of the NEF was that it brought together progressive educators in an international forum. This is well documented, but the range of that international network should perhaps be mentioned. Mrs. Beatrice Ensor, Dr. Elisabeth Rotten and Dr. Adolphe Ferriere were the first Directors of the NEF. From the beginning, therefore, the NEF was an international organisation, with strong links between France, Germany and England.

The letterhead which the Fellowship used in 1936 listed an Executive Board, which, in addition to those three, included William H. Boyd, Jean Piaget, Harold Rugg and Carleton Washburne. (WEF I/34a) Piaget himself was based in Switzerland, giving another European link. He had also been active in the foundation of the International Bureau of Education in Geneva, and was consequently at the hub of another international network.

The European links of the NEF were strong, through the various sections of the Fellowship itself. Boyd, Rugg and Washburne, however, were all based in the United States. Direct, participatory links with the USA were perhaps less strong, where the Progressive Education Association promoted many of the same ends as the NEF. John Dewey, for example, was not



directly linked to the Executive Board of the NEF. However, the institutional links between the NEF and the PEA were strong. In 1932 Beatrice Ensor reported that a joint committee of the PEA and WEF had been set up to cooperate on the Nice conference of 1932, and was also charged with the task "of working out a scheme for the permanent relationship between the Progressive Education Association and the New Education Fellowship." (WEF I/34b)

The World Education Fellowship archive contains little information about the Mexico conference of 1935, which was organised jointly by the two organisations, but reports of that conference would doubtless indicate strong personal involvement of American progressive educators such as Dewey.

### A Network of Teachers

A second area where the network of the NEF is well documented is in the involvement of key teachers, often headteachers, in British progressive schools. Robert Skidelsky (1969) documents records the involvement of a number of prominent teachers in the NEF, of which the most famous was A.S.Neill. Neill was actively involved in the NEF, and was co-editor of *The New Era* up to his break with the Fellowship in 1923.

The active involvement of teachers in the NEF was, of course, crucial. Central to the development of the Fellowship was the notion that if only people could see good practice, then the new education would spread. A number of exemplary schools, where child-centred education could be seen to work, formed an important element of the programme of the Fellowship. These schools, some of which dated back to the end of the nineteenth century, developed in parallel with the Fellowship itself.

In a chapter entitled "The New Education", Skidelsky traces some aspects of the involvement of the NEF with the progressive education movement in the UK. Separately, he traces the contribution of Kurt Hahn, founder

and headmaster of Gordonstoun School, and of Cecil Reddie, who founded Abbotsholme in 1889. Although Skidelsky does not link these two institutions to the NEF, there would appear to be personal links. Kurt Hahn attended the NEF conference in Cheltenham in 1936, and delivered a lecture there. The links with Abbotsholme are more tenuous. Skidelsky (1969: 14) describes Bedales as the "most famous offshoot" of Abbotsholme. The Senior Master of Bedales, O.R.Powell, attended the NEF conference of 1929 in Elsinore, Denmark. (WEF III/186)

But these "flagship" schools which are documented in the literature are by no means the only schools which could be relied upon to exemplify the practices of the new education. In the attendance lists of NEF conferences of 1936 held in Cheltenham one can find many other heads; T.F.Coade, headmaster of Bryanston; W.B.Curry, headmaster of Dartington Hall; F.C.Happold, headmaster of Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury; E.Rogers, master at Charterhouse; R.V.H.Roseveare, headmaster of Cheltenham College; Dr.T.Thomas, headmaster of Leeds Grammar School. Looking at this in conjunction with other conference lists, this represents a substantial connection to a broad range of schools where a direct interplay between theory and practice could develop.

Although it is not possible, at this distance, to be sure that any or all of these conference participants were "paid up" members of the Fellowship, a good number of them were involved enough to have given a presentation to the conference.

### Links to the Administrators of Education

The third area that the NEF network touched was, by its nature, less likely to be documented. This was where the Fellowship involved administrators of education and inspectors at the national and local level. Most active of these was Mr.A.J.Lynch, Chairman of Tottenham Education Committee, who in the mid-1930's

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*"Central to the development of the Fellowship was the notion that if only people could see good practice, then the new education would spread."*

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was a member of the NEF Headquarters Committee, and at various times Secretary and vice-Chairman of that committee. Mrs.A.J.Lynch, a County councillor in Middlesex, attended the 1935 conference in St.Andrew's with her husband.

Again, this was not an isolated instance. In 1929 J.Compton, Director of Education for Barking, Essex, attended the NEF conference in Elsinore, as did G.S.M.Ellis, Secretary to the Education Committee of the National Union of Teachers. E.Salter Davies, Director of Education for Kent attended the Nice conference of 1932.

In 1936 R.R.Tomlinson, Senior Art Inspector of the London County Council attended the Conference in Cheltenham. By 1944 the Guiding Committee again had an active member from the field of educational administration in the person of Dr.E.T.Davies, Director of Education for Willesden.

Nor was this involvement with figures from the political and administrative side of education limited to the local level. A letter dated 12 February 1942 from J.Compton, Chairman of the English Section, invited the attendance of delegations at an "unofficial" conference to draft a Children's Charter. The conference was to be held on 11 and 12 April 1942. "The Rt.Hon.R.A.Butler, M.P., President of the Board of Education has kindly consented to deliver the opening address."(WEF I/35)

As luck would have it, we also know that H.Tayne, Education Officer of the County Borough of Brighton, attended the meeting, and lost his raincoat. A letter he sent in an attempt to recover the garment remains in the archive. Because of the paper shortage in 1942 the back of his note served as the circulation list of the report of the conference.

In 1955 the NEF capitalised on these links by holding a conference in Chichester for inspectors of schools. This was an international event attended by about thirty inspectors from various countries. The representatives from Britain included two from London, one from

Surrey, two from Kent, two from Derbyshire, and one each from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Monmouthshire and Devon.

### Higher Education

Yet a fourth area where the NEF developed strong links was among teachers and academics in institutions of higher education. The extent of involvement of these is not clear, and would certainly appear to have ranged from the actively involved to the nominal figurehead. Among the former we can find some who were members of the guiding committee. A meeting of that committee of 12

February 1944 was attended by J.A.Lauwerys of the London University Institute of Education, and Professor K.Mannheim of the London School of Economics.

Conference attenders and contributors included Sir Percy Nunn, Principal of the London Day Training Centre (later London University Institute of Education), J.J.Findlay, Honourary Professor of Education, University of Manchester, R.H.Tawney, Professor at the London School of Economics, Dr.Susan Isaacs, London University Institute of Education, Sir Ernest Simon of Manchester University, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Professor at Oxford University, and Sir Michael Sadler, Master of University College Oxford.

The report of the 1936 conference has an Introduction by Professor Fred Clarke, from which it may be deduced that he also attended the conference.

In addition to these prominent academics, and the obviously strong links to the University of London Institute of Education, there was also clearly a link with lectures in institutions involved in the preparation of teachers across the country. Those who attended conferences included G.H.Archibald, Principal of Westhill Training College, Birmingham, more than one lecturer from the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, D.Jordan of Goldsmith's College, and Dr.E.Lawrence, Director of the National Froebel Foundation.

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*"The Fellowship involved administrators of education and inspectors at the national and local level."*

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Through these and other contacts, the ideas of progressive education were able to inform the introduction of increasing numbers of teachers as they underwent their initial training. London University Institute of Education was particularly important in this respect, both in its role of directly preparing teachers, and in the connections which it developed with other institutions. The work of Dr. Susan Isaacs, who was an active member of the NEF, in developing the psychological foundations of progressive education in early childhood deserves to be singled out for special mention.

**The New Era**

Finally, the fifth area where the network reached was the readers of *The New Era*. This was the private property of Beatrice Ensor from its inception in 1920, and did not technically become the property of the NEF until 1946, when she presented it to the Fellowship. However, *The New Era* had effectively been the official journal of the NEF for a long time before that. In 1946, when the handover was considered, it was felt necessary to attach a note to the documents covering the deliberations, to explain that *The New Era* was in fact *not* the property of the NEF already.

*The New Era* routinely reported contributions to conferences, developments in progressive schools, and the opinions of those who formed part of the network of people interested in education which has been traced here. It was an important link in the perceived project of the NEF which was to transmit concrete descriptions of good practice to practitioners, in the hope that they would emulate it.

**A Year in the Life of the NEF**

A report describing the activities of the NEF over the period June 1932 to June 1933 gives an interesting insight into the way in which these various levels of networking interacted.(WEF I/34) Many of the people identified above as

belonging to the NEF network feature in the meetings of that year. The activities and personnel of the various groups in the UK are given as below:

"England (Section) President: Mr E.Salter Davies, Director of Education, Kent: Ex-presidents: Sir Percy Nunn, Sir Michael Sadler: Secretary: A.J.Lynch"

The report of the Birmingham branch includes reference to Miss L.K.Barrie, Principal, King Edward's High School for Girls, in connection with a delegation of the Headmistresses Association to Canada. It also lists a number of speakers who gave lectures; Professor Emile Marcault, Miss D.H.Smith, Headmistress, Collegiate School Leicester, Dr.E.Rotten, A.J.Lynch and Miss M.Payne of the Home and School Council.

"Liverpool BranchPresident: Mr.C.F.Mott, Director of Education for Liverpool: Secretaries: Miss A.Tyson and Miss M.C. Woods"

The list of lecturers in Liverpool included Dr.Helen Wodehouse, Mistress of Girton College Cambridge, Mr.W. St.J.Pym, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, and Miss E.A. Nicholls of Dartington Hall. Apart from lectures, there was also a "conversazione" held at Wallasey Grammar School, where members were shown aspects of the scientific and cultural life of the school.

The President of the Manchester Branch was Professor J.F.Duff of Manchester University, and one of the lecturers there was G.R.A.Swaine, Principal of Kingsmoor School. The President of the South West Federation was Dr.John Murray, Principal of Exeter University College, and the Chairman was Mr.McAuliffe, Assistant Director of Education for Bristol.

The President of the Northern Ireland Group was Sir Richard Livingstone, Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast and the Chairman was Miss A.Purvis, Principal of Richmond Lodge School. One meeting was chaired by Mrs.Bonaparte Wyse, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland.

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*"The ideas of progressive education were able to inform the introduction of increasing numbers of teachers as they underwent their initial training. "*

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Another meeting was described as follows: "In Nov.[ember] Sir Henry Hadow gave an account of the manner in which the Hadow reports were compiled and of the extent to which reorganisation on the lines of the Reports had been carried out in England."

This snapshot of a single year's activities shows how the NEF involved, in active roles as committee members and officers, and as guest speakers, a range of headteachers, administrators, academics and teachers in a programme of activities.

### The Present

In the 1990's it is perhaps more difficult to imagine the kind of network which existed for the promotion of progressive education. Certainly it is difficult to imagine the present Secretary of State addressing a meeting of progressive educationists, as some of his predecessors did.

However, at least part of the present low profile of progressive education is the result of conspicuous success, and success in which progressive educationists, among them members of the Fellowship, played an important role. Since 1920 we have seen the development of a mass system of education, in the UK as in many other countries. We have seen the foundation of Unesco to promote international education in all its aspects. We have seen the establishment of teaching as an all graduate

profession in many countries, including the UK. And we have seen education increasingly informed by the insights offered by the academic study of psychology, sociology, and other humanistic sciences.

Further success can be seen in the flourishing of "single issue" organisations, to promote language instruction, to advance comprehensive schooling for everybody, to recognise individual children's needs, and to oppose corporal punishment in schools.

Of course, many of these improvements in education are opposed by those who think we should "get back to basics". And those are the same short-sighted people who think it is sensible, in this age of increasing international communication, for a country like the UK to try to exist apart from Unesco. And who think that in a modern technological society there is a decreasing need for graduate teachers. But we should take heart from the conspicuous successes of progressive education over the last 70 years.

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***"However, at least part of the present low profile of progressive education is the result of conspicuous success,"***

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## **Sucking Eggs Again: Is differentiation a new answer to helping children with learning difficulty?**

Philip Garner

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During the period following the 1988 Education (No.2) Act in England an increasing emphasis has been placed upon quasi-scientific terminology in curriculum approaches to deal with children who have special educational needs. To such technocratic terms as 'task analysis', 'continuum of support' and 'early intervention' have thus been added 'differentiation'. This has been described as being based upon, 'an understanding of individual differences (and) also the worth and value of each pupil's learning' (Barthorpe & Visser, 1991)

The overriding suggestion is that differentiation is that such a strategy provides a solution to 'problems' (whether in learning or social behaviour) which is both new and somehow, because of its procedural, pseudo-clinical basis, may provide instantly successful outcomes for both the teacher and the child.

This paper is a personal evaluation of the concept of 'differentiation' and is divided into four parts. The first will offer a sketch of some of the themes which currently appear apposite in working with children who have special educational needs. Secondly, I will propose that the term 'differentiation' is merely a bureaucratised form of what good teachers have consistently practised for a very long time. Thirdly, having accepted that teachers have no reason to feel de-skilled by technical language, I will provide a model for differentiation with a human face. Finally, I will draw each of these elements together and suggest a number of ways in which progress may be made towards meeting individual needs in the contemporary classroom.

### **1. Current Themes**

Work in special educational needs is often underpinned by feelings of guilt. As professionals who are charged with meeting the educational needs of underachieving children

teachers have frequently been criticised for apparent failure to do so. This criticism has been threefold in origin. On the one hand, and most notably, central government has suggested that the origins of declining standards may be traced to the post-Plowden classrooms we are all familiar with: the chaotically lovely, unstructured free-fall learning scenario where our children meander through a variety of whimsical topics and where to have a learning need which is unmet is seen as relatively unproblematic because the child will 'learn at her own pace if she's not pressurised'. One recent example of this has been the suggestion that reading failure is attributable to a real books approach.

In the second place, teachers are frequently seen as protagonists by parents, rather than as committed, supportive workers on behalf of the child with problems in school. Part of this is undoubtedly because of media attention, and the use of teachers as an easy target. A similar structural parallel may be drawn with social workers and, to a lesser extent, the health-care occupations.

Finally, as special needs professionals, teachers are frequently asked for 'cures' by non-specialist colleagues, betraying their pre-Warnock ideology nearly 15 years after that Report. Any intervention with a child who has a special educational need is consequently seen as a guarantee of a successful output in the guise of a cure. When this is not forthcoming a sense of professional animosity is generated because 'targets' have not been met and 'quality' has not been assured.

As a result, special needs teachers, like children they work with, tend to become marginalised professionally, in spite of the increased status accorded to special educational needs in ordinary schools post-1981. This in turn generates a feeling of guilt in many teachers that they are unable to 'help'. As a consequence there



is frequently the desire to persevere, often without the essential outside support; this results in frustration for the child and the often unacknowledged guilt feelings on the part of the teacher.

A second theme may be developed from the recommendation, made explicit in much literature concerning special educational needs, that all teachers are teachers of children who have learning or so-called adjustment problems. A parallel interpretation is the suggestion that all children too are in fact 'special'. The implication of this debatable logic is that whole schools should effectively 'own' their own special educational needs concerns. But the impact of this view on curriculum-making has been limited, and in one sense has served only to query the existence of specialised support for one discrete section of the school population. This is especially the case as schools become increasingly scrutinised for 'outputs', measured by test scores, attendance rates, external examination results and so on.

Thirdly, there is an assumption, evidenced by current practice, that curriculum innovation in special education requires only limited resourcing, both in terms of personnel and finance. This belies acceptance of the belief that for most schools the special needs population is at least 18 per cent, and for others this figure may be as much as 30 per cent. Resources are almost certainly not proportionate with this. Within the whole category of special educational needs too, resources at both school and Local Education Authority (LEA) level are unevenly distributed, with some categories of special needs being disproportionately under-resourced. The implication of this for curriculum planning for, and classroom teaching of, children with special educational needs is of crucial importance.

Finally, the cumulative, debilitating effect on the special needs teacher's professional artistry needs to be acknowledged. Only occasionally is the suggestion made, either officially or in the educational literature, that children who have special educational needs are a structural component of the educational landscape, and that, even given adequate resources, such children will always form part of any school

population. As a result of this, and the preceding three themes, special needs teachers in classrooms are faced with answering a daily question in their interaction with their children: is it all worth it? That considerable efforts continue to be made by them against this background of withering criticism, self-doubt and under-resourcing is indeed remarkable.

## **2. 'Sucking eggs again?' or What I learnt from Mrs McCarthy**

Over twenty-five years ago Pope (1968) outlined a problem which was central then, and continues to be now, to curriculum making for those children who have special educational needs. This related to the capture of the imagination of the child who has a learning difficulty. He suggested that this process should involve 'skill born of delight... motivation, atmosphere, skilled diagnosis insight, understanding, flexibility... these are the first essentials'.(p.62)

Pope is anticipating in this remark a number of attributes of the 'new' movement in teaching those children who have learning difficulty, referred to as differentiation. The challenge to teachers remains exactly the same: to stimulate the active involvement of the learner through an adapted curriculum which, at the same time, retains breadth, balance and relevance.

The debate concerning curricular provision for children who have special educational needs continues to have this problem as its focus. Moreover, there are uncomfortable suspicions that differentiation post- 1988 is really a technocratic term for reducing the breadth of the curricular experience for some children. Of course, programmes of study and their attainment targets do suggest access. But the reality for many children is quite different. Most teachers are very aware that AT's can be made to 'fit' programmes of study even where the content of those programmes for some children is limited in breadth, balance and relevance.

My point here is that in striving for quality of output (measured against attainment targets in National Curriculum areas) teachers are effectively being manipulated to produce a far less innovative form of teaching than otherwise might be the case.



Nor is the struggle to differentiate, it's strategies and it's obvious successes, something which is original to post-1988 educational provision, either in special educational needs or elsewhere. Mrs McCarthy was a differentiator par-excellence. I recall her as a teacher whose approach in the classroom was to provide the means by which her children could solve problems, make decisions, engage in group work, pass the eleven-plus, be awakened to real joy in counting, and to read with understanding and increasing confidence. And all this before they ran out into the playground, all safe in the knowledge that Mrs McCarthy could sort things out, whether it be simple addition, the project work on the old Glossop steam railway, or the passage of the reds to the final of the European Cup.

I was, I suppose, a fifties version of the child with special educational needs. In my case such needs were very much in the plural: I couldn't count, I struggled with spelling and my reading age was 8-months behind my chronological age, and I was frequently in trouble with Mrs Hargreaves, who drove a Ford Zephyr and didn't like me. Mrs McCarthy was my idol. She would solve everything, even save me from a hiding from Mum and Dad, whose educational philosophy made Kenneth Clarke and John Patten seem like A.S. Neill. In helping me, I recall her using 'The Young Explorers World of Nature'. Far too complicated for me under normal circumstances, her *teaching* of me was based on carefully structured tasks, calculated questions and artful suggestions which caught my interest yet did not patronise me. I tried to do the same (less successfully) when I became a teacher.

The issue was straightforward. Mrs McCarthy taught children... all of them. She would undoubtedly cause the curriculum planner of today frequent nightmares, in that to outsiders there may not have seemed to have been any coherence or structure to the work that she did. On the receiving end, we understood. She was special. Special needs children need special teachers. No differentiation, no apparent method, but some guru.

In the period immediately prior to the publication of the Warnock Report there was

ample evidence that McCarthy clones were in abundance. Then called 'remedial teachers', they offered evidence that, in many cases, the use of technocratic terms concerning the curriculum like 'modification', 'breadth', 'identification' and 'continuity' were already in active use, albeit accompanied by the language of a medical orientation, whereby children who had learning difficulty were 'diagnosed' and then 'treated'.

Thus Mason (1969) stated that all children needed four kinds of activities which are integrated in a meaningful way:

1. Interdisciplinary Enquiry
2. Experience of Autonomous Studies
3. Remedial Support
4. Strong Personal Interests

These are supported by a number of specific curriculum strategies, which may include

1. Expert Analysis of the Child's Difficulties
2. A Programme of Study
3. The Organisational Support of the Whole School

Finally, Mason stated unequivocally that, '...we must be able to see the strengths of individual children as they develop. I have known many good remedial teachers. They have never nagged away at weaknesses. They have instead developed a personal relationship which allowed respect on both sides, finding worth in children whom others disrespected, seeking the strengths in a youngster which could be used to overcome the weakness'.(p.26)

It would therefore appear that what has happened is that the message for curriculum strategy is almost the same. Only some elements of the language have changed, to incorporate the technocratic, subject-orientated stance of the post-1988 era. The point seems to be that the professional culture of the special needs teacher has hardly changed, and the McCarthyian strategies used by them are deeply ingrained within that culture. This, I firmly believe, is a matter for celebration rather than despair.

### **3. Differentiation With a Human Face**

So where does this leave the classroom teacher in the 1990's? Faced with an ever-increasing workload, much of which is concerned with reporting on, rather than directly tackling, the



varied learning needs of Warnock's 18 per cent, there is a tendency to reach for ready-made schemes, for stylised programmes of study, and for high-tech solutions for difficulties which have always been present.

This is understandable. Paper-policies are frequently reassuring to parents, administrators, governors and researchers. Needless to say they are fundamentally instruments whereby those who have the least contact with the classroom can control what goes on within it.

It is therefore essential that schools, and the classroom teachers within them, regain the central place in curriculum-making for those children who have special educational needs. This ultimately involves working alongside children, rather than 'delivering' segments of pre-ordained knowledge like the man from Express Dairies delivers his milk.

But this is easy talk. How can I ensure that my colleagues in school have an understanding of a concept of learning needs met by a differentiated approach across a range of activities? My belief, however naive, is that a far clearer agenda for meeting the learning needs of children should be established. Central to this is an agreement that everything which is experienced by children should have built in to it by the teacher the following principles of differentiation; I shall call it 'differentiation with a human face':

1. Negotiation and agreement of learning outcomes between children, their teachers and parents.

2. Parallel tasks of appropriate difficulty, based on the childrens' interests

3. Variety of presentation of learning tasks, including cooperative learning activities

4. Encouraging a variety of responses from the children

5. Listening to the accounts that children provide of their learning experiences

6. Providing nonjudgemental feedback

The focus for this activity is the classroom teacher. It is not the curriculum coordinator, the headteacher, the postholder for special needs or the man from the LEA who can never help you, but always knows a man who can. Neither is it the educational psychologist, who insists with night-comes-after-day regularity that Leroy

would benefit from 1: 1 tuition? Nor is it the iconoclast at the Institute, who is rooted in a potting compound which mixes idealism and cynicism with equal amounts. The teacher, working in classrooms alongside children, is the key.

#### 4. Dare we be who we are?

I have attempted, in the foregoing argument, to show that, in spite of the technical language used in recent curriculum approaches the role and the perceptions of many teachers of children who have special educational needs have not substantially changed, even over a considerable period of time. Essentially what has happened is that, in the moves towards a more instrumental educational culture, procedures and the language that describes them have become bureaucratised. The civil servant-administrator has begun to take hold of the classroom.

The central thesis of this paper rests upon an alternative vision: the reinforcement of the role of the teacher in the context of the classroom. The context of special educational needs has become a breeding ground for pseudo-scientific propositions, which appear to be in danger of returning us to the neanderthal thinking that 'it's all Wayne's fault'. What teachers of special children need to do is to draw strength from their heritage, to be fuelled with confidence in the way in which they have accepted the challenge of the National Curriculum, so that ultimately they might just dare to be who they really are: teachers of children.

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## The Writing of a Policy for Equal Opportunities in a School of Education - An evolutionary process

Pamela E. Bishop

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### **Abstract**

*The article examines the process involved in the formulation of an equal opportunities policy and it takes the form of a case study for the School of Education in the University of Nottingham. It discusses the significance of the relevant internal and external factors affecting issues of equal opportunities in initial teacher training institutions. It outlines the theoretical principles which underpinned the research, the development and writing of the document. It considers briefly the ways in which the policy will influence practice in the future in view of changes proposed for teacher education.*

"Equal Opportunities is not an option on the timetable; it is an essential and integral part of good quality training provision. I trust that the measures to increase teacher supply in the UK will take cognizance of this fact. If they do not then sexism will continue to influence the outcome of the education system; job segregation, unequal pay and skill shortages will be perpetuated and the objectives of the Education Reform Act will not be met"

Lynda Carr Principal Education officer  
Equal Opportunities Commission 1989

Equality of opportunity, whether it be concerned with the provision of access, treatment or outcome is not only non-optional but is actually central to the work of those who teach at all levels. Practising teachers may not always acknowledge the challenge in such bold terms, and the demands of the daily classroom may often seem removed from such high ideals. However, most would argue that they continuously strive to allow their pupils to fulfil individual potential. In teacher education there is a double responsibility. The learning

environment for the student teacher must satisfy the criteria for optimising personal achievement. At the same time the training institution must provide a sound role model and a well constructed course which will enable the new teacher to develop a commitment to the principles of equal opportunities and to acquire associated practical strategies for work in the classroom.

There has been no shortage of support offered to teachers over the last two decades. National legislation and the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission have made a significant contribution. There has been well documented school-based research, an increase in the available literature on the subject, access to commercially sponsored schemes, the government funded Technical and Vocational Education Initiative project now reaching every state school and school inservice training events with the production of appropriate in-house documents and materials. More recently attempts have been made to dismiss issues of equality of opportunity as a subject for serious consideration and to suggest that there is no more work to be done. Evidence from other aspects of society such as the police force and the prison service informs us that this is not the case. It is true that within schools and colleges there is probably little conscious sex discrimination yet statistics reveal that the outcomes for boys and girls in education and in employment are on the whole quite different (Equal Opportunities Commission 1991). The sex of the pupil is still a major determinant of achievement and the laudable educational objectives of teachers are not yet being met.

"Good equal opportunities practice in schools depends ultimately upon good teachers who are trained well initially and whose professional skills are enhanced by in-service training



(INSET) in equal opportunities throughout their teaching careers."

(Equal Opportunities Commission 1989)

The Equal Opportunities Commission support for Local Education Authorities INSET programmes was extensive during the 1970s and 1980s but there was little evidence that it was being matched by similar work in initial teacher education. For example Her Majesty's Inspectorate report on initial training of teachers (DES 1987) made little reference to equal opportunities. It was in response to reports such as this that the Commission in 1988 embarked on a formal investigation into the then current equal opportunities practice in initial teacher training. Questionnaires were sent to all 89 initial teacher training institutions in England and Wales. Responses were received from 84. Additional information was collected by interviews in 17 of these and by further discussion at two public seminars.

The overall findings revealed that whilst over 75% of institutions did have an equal opportunities policy there was a lack of evidence to show that it was being implemented. There were places with a written statement but where the staff were uncertain of or indifferent to its existence. Other institutions with a policy had no clear objectives for its effect on practice, and uncoordinated work depended on the commitment and energy of a few individuals.

The majority of courses did not have a comprehensive strategy for helping students to examine the role of equal opportunities on teaching practice and only half of them asked students to report back on gender issues in the classroom. The best practice seemed to be in institutions where the policy was effectively communicated to staff and students, where there was appropriate staff training in its implementation and where there was a monitored programme of resulting action.

Earlier, the Department of Education and Science in its first initial teacher training

document (DES 1984) had included reference to the students' responsibility to consider the implications of the individual differences in their pupils.

"Students should be prepared... to teach the full range of pupils with their diversity of ability, behaviour, social background and ethnic origins. They will need to learn how to respond flexibly to such diversity and to guard against preconceptions based on the race or sex of pupils".

(DES 1984 Circular 3/84)

The Equal Opportunities Commission report (EOC 1989) commented that the guidelines were to be welcomed but they did not encourage a high profile for matters of equal opportunities. They did not require the formulation and monitoring of a policy, nor make explicit reference to the need to raise awareness in staff and students and to provide opportunities to acquire appropriate professional skills. The final recommendation of the report was that each institution should produce an annual equal

opportunities review and that the Department of Education and Science should make funds available to support the development work required.

In November 1989 new criteria for the accreditation of courses of initial teacher training were published (DES 1989). They were more prescriptive in form and content than those of their

predecessors. They were directed more towards outputs; towards what students should be able to show they knew, understood and could do by the end of their training. They also reflected the importance of training teachers for the National Curriculum. In the area of equal opportunities this represented significant progress and encouragingly made explicit reference to the Equal Opportunities Commission report of earlier that year.

"On completion of their courses, students should be aware of the links and common

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***"The training institution must provide a sound role model and a well constructed course which will enable the new teacher to develop a commitment to the principles of equal opportunities"***

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grounds between subjects and be able to incorporate in their teaching cross-curricular dimensions (eg equal opportunities, multicultural education and personal and social education)...."

"Students should learn to guard against preconceptions based on the race, gender, religion or other attributes of pupils and understand the need to promote equal opportunities"

"Institutions may find it helpful to draw up a written equal opportunities policy ...."

(DES 1989 Circular 24/89)

This was a direct and welcome challenge for those in teacher training institutions who looked for external support in pursuing the promotion of sound equal opportunities policy and practice.

The School of Education in Nottingham University has one of the largest secondary Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses in the country and recruits 260 students each year into 10 subject areas. By 1989 the framework discussed above was on the agenda of the institution.

In addition a number of internal contributory factors were operating in the university. An unsettling yet nonetheless revitalising period of staff change was taking place which included the appointment of academic colleagues straight from teaching posts in comprehensive schools. The newcomers were receptive to ideas and had expertise to offer. The students were, each year, increasingly aware of the principles and practice of equal opportunities as they had been experienced in society at large. In addition the growing number of mature and international students recruited onto courses brought a further perspective for consideration. There was encouragement from senior management which manifested itself in many practical ways including the appointment of a lecturer for equal opportunities. The University of Nottingham was also being

prompted to review its employment practice in the field of equal opportunities.

"The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals recommends that each university should formulate and make known to all job applicants and employees a clearer policy statement on equal opportunities which reaffirms its charter and confirms its commitment to a policy of equal opportunities in employment"

(Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals 1991)

It was gratifying to know that the School of Education was ahead in commitment and planning. Although the Department of Education and Science did not respond directly to the Equal Opportunities Commission request for funds to be made available, it was a government sponsored project which provided the resources to facilitate the development work in Nottingham. The Technical, Vocational and Education Initiative (TVEI) had enabled a limited number of pilot schools from 1983 to provide an education which was a more relevant

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***"The best practice seemed to be in institutions where the policy was effectively communicated to staff and students, where there was appropriate staff training in its implementation and where there was a monitored programme of resulting action."***

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preparation for the world of work. Equal opportunities was one of the key areas to be addressed in this innovative approach to the curriculum. Teacher training institutions were later involved in TVEI and similarly were encouraged to develop their courses so that the newly qualified teachers emerging would be familiar with work in TVEI schools.

The preparation of the bid for the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative-Initial Teacher Training(TVEI-ITT) project provided an initial and appropriate opportunity for work to begin in the School of Education on an Equal Opportunities policy.

The TVEI-ITT project in the School of Education was funded for the academic years 1989/90 and 1990/91. The action plan for the Equal Opportunities theme was written and a working group was established. From the







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Professor John Stephenson, Chairman World Education Fellowship.





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beginning there were three separate yet interrelated objectives:

1 The development of the existing PGCE course to include a series of learning opportunities relating to equal opportunities for students; tasks to raise awareness, tasks involving reading, writing and the discussion of the theoretical perspectives, and tasks of a practical nature to be carried out with children in schools.

2 The promotion of staff development to allow staff to analyze their own practice in equal opportunities and devise materials and methods for school-focused work in separate subject areas.

3 The writing of the Equal Opportunities policy for the School of Education.

Field work began in the autumn term of 1989 involving visits to educational institutions across the complete age range. The complex relationship between policy and practice was observed and investigated. Schools were found where the policy document was well produced and advertised by senior management but where other staff and students seemed to be unaware of its existence or where practice within the classroom did not reflect the intentions stated. Conversely examples of sound equal opportunities practice were seen and enthusiastically discussed yet the official policy document was not in evidence. Some important lessons were learned from these experiences.

As materials and ideas were brought back into the institution and processed, curriculum development started for the PGCE course. It was apparent that inservice training was required at the same time and the first staff professional development day in the School of Education was held in April 1990. It was well attended and staff in their evaluations were appreciative of the atmosphere created and the challenging yet non threatening activities which enabled them to explore with their colleagues important personal and social issues.(Shipstone,1990)

Progress was rapid and the modified course with supporting documentation was in place for the September 1990 intake of students. Course and staff development continued over the following two years and are reported elsewhere (Bishop, Biddulph and Sands 1992 and Sands and Bishop 1993 ). These important curricular and personal achievements were successful in satisfying the criteria of the Department of Education and Science Circular No 24/89 and were highly praised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate when they visited the School of Education in 1992.(DFE expected date of publication 1993)

What of the policy itself? The process of constructing it and the final product was based on a number of theoretical principles.

1 The policy should arise out of existing good practice and should feed back into that practice continuously to upgrade it. Therefore initially it should not precede course and staff development. Observations and research elsewhere had helped us to appreciate the value of drawing the final document from existing conditions and not imposing it on working practice.

2 The venture should be collaborative in nature. It was important to involve staff and students at all stages in the growth of the document so that they had a genuine sense of ownership. It was advisable to consult personnel and other institutions further afield who

would have valuable advice to offer and experiences to share. This model rejected the more traditional and hierarchical one so often used for decision making and it employed a methodology which was more in keeping with the principles of equal opportunities.

3 The composition and nature of the writing group would be important. The group should at the outset be open to anyone interested and should also include representatives from all those working in the School of Education. In this way available energy and enthusiasm of volunteers would be used and participation from others could be encouraged. Group membership

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***"It was apparent that  
inservice training was  
required at the same time  
and the first staff  
professional development  
day in the School of  
Education was held in April  
1990."***

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would then be closed for the rest of the academic year to ensure continuity of contribution and a greater commitment from members. The convenor would maintain direction and momentum.

4 The process by its very nature should be self pacing and not necessarily unidirectional.

"Rushing a policy through either democratic, bureaucratic or authoritarian adoption is a strategy which has been tried and which has failed. One cannot wait for everyone's support, but some is needed so it may be necessary to build in a period of consciousness raising." (Gaine 1989)

The writing took place over a period of two academic years. At the beginning no clear outcome was in mind.

5 The policy should include all aspects of inequality relevant to the life and work of the institution. This seemed to be an unrealistic goal.

However it was based on the premise that work had already been done in staff and course development and in any case we were concurrently being supported by the work on conditions of employment within the university policy.

6 The policy should be more than global statements of intent which were expressed only in general terms. It was important that the final document should be detailed and should support the day to day work of staff and students in very practical ways.

Fifteen colleagues were, at one time or another closely involved with the writing group. They first came together during the Autumn term 1990 and included a nucleus of those from the working group of the previous year, other committed and enthusiastic volunteers, and coopted individuals who brought with them a particular viewpoint or experience not otherwise represented. At the first meeting the group brainstormed personal issues of concern and those that should be addressed by the institution. In beginning to think about a procedure it drew up a long list of all those within the building, on campus and

elsewhere who would have contributions to make.

Questionnaires were sent to one in five of all students registered for courses in the School of Education and their concerns and suggestions for practical strategies were canvassed. The under-representation of ethnic minority staff, problems of access to the building and resources, and the perceived value of a published policy were among the issues arising. All members of staff, academic, catering, cleaning, technical, administrative and secretarial in the Faculty of Education were asked to respond to a series of questions about the ideal and practical implications of working in the institution. Again a wealth of suggestions was forthcoming which included additional references to the procedure for dealing with harassment, conditions of recruitment and employment for under-represented groups and more general statements on the importance of creating a caring and supportive environment.

On the university campus, those working in the Personnel Department, the chaplaincy, the international office and the student counselling service were contacted along with representatives from staff and student unions and all Heads of

Department and Wardens of Halls of Residence. The number of responses received was disappointing but some valuable contacts were made. One resulted in a joint seminar for staff from the School of Education and the School of Social Sciences. Common ground was found and explored, experiences shared and mutual support was provided. The event was reported in the university newsletter and it provided an opportunity to raise awareness generally about the work going on, to feed into the discussions beginning to taking place at university level and to raise the profile of the principles involved for all.

Finally an ambitious consultation phase which took two terms was embarked on. Contact was made with representatives working in the field of equal opportunities in four Local Education Authorities nearby, in local schools and colleges

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***"It was important to involve staff and students at all stages in the growth of the document so that they had a genuine sense of ownership."***

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of further education and in ten Schools of Education nationwide. Once again it was not the quantity but quality of response that was so encouraging. Letters were received providing helpful examples of documentation but more importantly offering personal support and encouragement. The analysis of feedback and the preparation of the summary of findings was an interesting and rewarding experience and provided the working group with a clearer view of what should be included and what shape the final policy might take.

It was agreed that in addition to statements of principle which should apply not only to the School of Education but also be compatible with the framework of the University document, there should follow specific guidelines for each area of working practice. These were broadly identified as student recruitment and admissions, curriculum and course design, teaching/learning styles and resources, pastoral care and the working environment and conditions of staff employment. In addition it was considered advisable to include recommendations for the mechanism by which the policy was to be accepted, monitored, revised and updated. The actual writing now started some eighteen months after the first proposal had been made.

The writing stage was initially a cooperative venture and colleagues spent a morning off site to recall the original brainstorming phase, to focus on the information collated from the consultation phase, and to commit to paper a collection of ideas, principles and strategies grouped under the agreed headings. The convenor of the group took these notes and put together the first draft document for the beginning of the autumn term 1991. During the rest of that term the group worked further on the policy, developed detailed proposals for dealing with harassment procedures and presented the second draft to a staff meeting in December 1991. At that stage all staff were reminded of the progress to date and were encouraged to read the document, process the contents and to support the staff development day planned for February 1992 which would be devoted to detailed discussion and final drafting of the policy.

It had been almost two years earlier that the first inservice day had been organised away from the normal work place. On this second occasion the agenda was more specific and participants were encouraged to work in different groups on a range of tasks which would allow staff to read and internalise the document and provide overall feedback as well as generate specific comments, reactions and suggestions. Evaluation was enthusiastic. The programme of activities had enabled staff to engage productively with the contents of the document and valuable written material was available for collation and processing by two members of the writing group. The third draft took shape quickly with some refinement to overall form and with some revisions to the guidelines. Staff were once more invited to comment and after minor but nonetheless significant modification the resulting policy was accepted by the School of Education planning group and presented for acceptance at Faculty Board in June 1992.

The staff and students in the School of Education finally had the long-awaited policy (Bishop et al 1992) but it was soon clear that the real work was about to begin. Before the end of the summer term the first meeting of those interested to serve on the monitoring group was held. Three areas of work were identified and some action was taken.

What of the future? The role of a monitoring and review group was built into the policy and will ensure that it remains in high profile. There will continue to be a representative group of staff and student colleagues actively committed to the principles and practice of equality in the workplace. Others will have a point of contact for referrals and discussion and will be reminded of personal and institutional concerns as reviews are carried out, annual reports are published and targets are set for following years. The university policy is now in place and is beginning to manifest itself in supportive ways. Staff training, for example, is available for those involved in interviewing. For all staff the period for policy writing has been a time for personal and professional growth. Significant changes are noticeable in the areas of interpersonal language,



attitudes and behaviour, in personnel recruitment and support and in course design.

It must however be recognised that equal opportunities is just one aspect of work in a School of Education. Although it is a fundamental consideration in all that we do, there is a danger that ground can be lost as other pressing issues have to be addressed. At the beginning of 1992 the Department for Education released the latest criteria for initial teacher training (DFE 1992). These refer to changes proposed for the relationship between, and individual responsibilities of, schools and training institutions. The competences expected of newly qualified teachers are listed and in the category of further professional development students are expected to develop

"an awareness of individual differences including social, psychological, developmental and cultural dimensions"

(DFE 1992 Circular 9/92)

It is disheartening to note that the importance of equal opportunities is not emphasised in the document and that the status of the issue is no different from that of ten years before.

One must expect that the nature of work carried out during this period in teacher training institutions has been so effective that it cannot easily be eradicated by legislation. The writing of the policy in the School of Education, University of Nottingham is founded on a well constructed process, supported by research, experience and theoretical considerations. It is important to recognise that the process has taken place and that, by its nature, it has affected all those who work in the institution. The written document provides the evidence for the completion of the process so far and provides guidance and direction for the next phase.

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## Round the World - WEF Section News

Rosemary Crommelin

### Headquarters

There have been several occasions recently when the Guiding Committee has consulted Sections on matters where it was felt a useful decision could be reached only after a wider, rather than a committee, airing.

We were very grateful for the prompt replies to all our enquiries: on the choice of venue for the 1996 Conference; on the possibility of Sections receiving New Era material on disk for local printing; on the new Editorship of the journal (David Turner having completed more than the three years he originally promised us) and Sneh Shah's proposals for the future, among them that New Era should become a refereed journal; on the timing of the 1995 Conference, and most recently on each Section's proposals for participation in the programme. Again our warmest thanks to all Sections who responded so helpfully.

When considering the UN Conference in 1995 it emerged from our enquiries that in several countries the Easter vacation is now very short, and overall dates do not always coincide, so that led us to the summer vacation, with mid-July being the optimum time. We have therefore arranged for the conference to take place from Monday, July 11, to Saturday morning, July 16, 1995, at the Froebel Educational Institute in Roehampton Lane, London SW15.

During that week we hope to spend a day focussed upon

Westminster Central Hall where the first full meeting of the United Nations took place. We shall see the plaque which commemorates the occasion, and we hope to arrange a celebratory lunch, followed by a meeting of WEF and our guests in Westminster Central Hall. We hope that each Section will be responsible for a session during the conference, and look forward to hearing what form they would like their contribution to take.

All this, however, concerns the summer of 1995, and before then we shall look forward to the Japanese Conference next August.

### Japan

We understand from the Japanese Section that the response so far has been good and they are assured of a valuable contingent from overseas, including two from Moscow, invited by Nick Baikloff of the Queensland Section.

As WEF members already know, the theme is "Education for a World Family," which is appropriate in that 1994 has been declared by the United Nations as "The International Year of the Family." The eight topics to be considered by the conference will highlight the educational perspective in confronting problems in the fields of development, environment, religious and ethnic conflict, social injustice, and world hunger. In the words of the Japanese Section's conference-letter, "....We have planned the symposia sessions to reflect our

hope for the realisation of a just and harmonious world family." Enquiries, as soon as possible please, to Mrs Toyoko Aisawa, 1-16-19 Midorigaoka, Meguroku, Tokyo, 152 Japan. Tel.Fax. 03-3717-7439.

### The Netherlands

The official report of the Learner Managed Learning Conference held in Amsterdam is being written by Dr Sneh Shah. In order to keep down costs, it has been decided that instead of an elaborate published report, an "in house" production will be available for purchase individually on request.

### South Australia

Approval by the Director General of Education in South Australia has been given to the South Australia WEF Section for their project involving the preparation of a brochure for schools demonstrating effective teaching practices in Values Education. The project, which will encourage contributions from a wide range of educationists, will form the basis of the Section's presentation at the Japanese Conference.

### USA

I do not wish to anticipate Daniel Moynihan's article, *One Common Heart*, which can be found on page 89, but I cannot let the occasion pass without some comment.

The story concerns four seventh and eighth grade students from his classes at Glastonbury and their presentation of a project



outlining their concerns for human rights before a delegation of NGOs, chaired by the Chief of the Centre for Human Rights, at the United Nations. The students - Gabriel Mass, Julie Radocchia, Andrea Goodrich and Muhammad Rahman - had written the winning essays in a class contest on the issue of human rights.

It was a well-researched project. Students in Daniel Moynihan's classes decided their subject would be Myanmar (formerly Burma) where they would study both the needs of the country in a current crisis, and also debate what they could do as students to help. They wrote to all the embassies of the United Nations regarding the closing of schools, the mistreatment of teachers, and the exile of over a thousand Muslims from northern Burma. More than two dozen embassies sent encouraging replies, which gave the students a sense of achievement in that they felt themselves to be part of a democratic process which brought their concerns before those who might be able to influence, and hopefully resolve, the problems.

The formal presentation was well received, and at the same time students from the Gideon Welles School presented to Mrs Stamatopoulou-Robbins, who chairs the Centre for Human Rights, a scroll of recognition to the Centre for their efforts in helping to establish the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Even more rewarding, however, were the informal comments later in the UN cafeteria, where the students were continually approached and congratulated on having done so well, with such comments as "the best in fifteen years," and "this is

what the UN is about." As they were leaving the building, one of the NGO delegates gave the students a letter inviting them to attend a youth conference, sponsored through the UN, in Vienna. Details of the success of that conference can be found in Daniel Moynihan's Report.

In quoting one of the congratulatory comments made informally after the presentation: "this is what the UN is about," I think this would sum up what most of us feel. It was a wonderful experience for the students; and to Daniel Moynihan, who is the official representative of WEF at the United Nations, we send special thanks and congratulations. Our thanks, too, to Patricia Vann who edits the US Newsletter, *Worldscope*, for reporting the story.

US Section officers and members of the Connecticut Chapter (WEFCONN) held a successful meeting early in October to discuss future plans for WEF in the United States. The Section also reported on a number of activities scheduled to take place during the autumn and winter.

"India and the United States: Perceptions and Misperceptions" was the title of a lecture given by Dr Joseph Elder of the University of Wisconsin-Madison at a WEFCONN meeting on October 26. Co-sponsored by the Asian American Studies Institute and the Department of Educational Leadership, UCONN, the event took place at the University of Connecticut.

December fixtures include a talk on "Arab-American Family Life and Adjustment in the USA," at the Tunxis Community College in Farmington; and a holiday party for WEFCONN members and foreign students

studying at the Institute of Public Service in West Hartford. During the winter or early spring, WEFCONN and UCONN's School of Education will jointly sponsor a talk by Professor Naomi Tutu on education in South Africa.

### **Victoria**

From Arthur Sandell in Melbourne came news of the Fourth D J Ross Memorial Lecture, given in October by Professor Hedley Beare at Waverley Civic Centre, and hosted by the WEF Victoria Section and Waverley City Libraries. Professor Beare's subject was "School for an age which is post industrial, post modern, post Christian and post scientific: a new curriculum agenda." There was opportunity to discuss and debate Professor Beare's talk about the many issues raised by the impact of major social change on education, and following the lecture and discussion, a social evening, with supper provided, in true WEF style.

Professor Beare is Professor of Education at Melbourne University's Institute of Education, and is a well-known contributor to educational matters. Among his published works, two papers are particularly noteworthy: "The curriculum for the 1990s: a new package or a new spirit," and "An educator speaks to his grandchildren."

Dorothy Ross was a former Australian President of WEF; an innovative headmistress of Melbourne Girls Grammar School (1936-56) and an inspiration to teachers in training, she is recognised as one of Australia's great educators who left a lasting mark on the history of education in Victoria.



## One Common Heart

For ten days in June, 1993, four students from Gideon Welles school in Glastonbury, Connecticut, were participants at the World Youth Conference on human rights in Vienna Austria. The students were accompanied by Daniel Moynihan, the Glastonbury Vienna program director and social studies teacher, and Charles Graham, chaperone and music teacher. The Youth Conference was organized by Teresa Vannini and Caroline Mueller (Coalition for Children of the Earth) and Nina Lynn, process design, to run in conjunction with the United Nations Conference on Human Rights. The students were part of almost 200 children aged nine to eighteen from around the world.

The young delegates represented such varied regions as Siberia, Central and South America, the Philippines and the West Bank. They further represented unique and diverse experiences relating stories of living in war zones or on reservations or the demanding environment of poverty and isolation.

From the start of the conference students quickly were down to work. Through trained facilitators and consensus building techniques individual study groups grappled with the problems of sustainable development, poverty, the environment and their effect on human rights.

The sessions ended in the drawing up of a final document of children's concerns. Sleepy Eye Sharon La Frambose, from the Sioux Nation of North America, and Rosa Perla Anaya, from El Salvador, were chosen to speak for the children. Both represented a deliberate election process that respected leadership qualities and speaking abilities.

With great pride and excitement the more than forty page document was presented at the General Assembly hall in the Vienna Conference Center. The message of the two young ambassadors was straight forward and

direct. Sleepy Eye called on all to forget prejudices based on past attitudes or appearance and to listen to the sameness of one common heart: Rosa called on all to stop war as she held up a tattered picture of her father, "who had died a hero trying to *stop the fighting!*" All at the conference appeared moved as the children were given a standing ovation.

For my students, Gabriel Mass, Julie Radocchia, Andrea Goodrich, and Muhammad Rahman as well as many others in attendance, the experience went far beyond any exchange program or children's conference. With little available lead time the way through the political and administrative process was creatively engineered by Principal Thomas Russo. The Glastonbury community enthusiastically supported the students journey to Vienna as over 6,000 dollars was raised in little over four weeks. Parents were involved in preparation for their children's trip and presentations. Once in Vienna the children developed more than new friendships as they quickly learned how to work together (Arab and Jew, Croatian, Serb and Muslim, etc.) to create goals based on common interests and reason.

The Glastonbury students observed life in a foreign culture and grew in their understanding of difference. They found ways to communicate with people with whom they could not speak. When other student delegates spoke to them in English as well as being able to speak several other languages my students developed a driving need to improve their own world language skills.

Beyond the interaction of the Children's Conference itself each day was a real and exciting learning experience that only an historic event such as the United Nations Conference on Human Rights could provide. Outside the Austrian Center student concepts were challenged by the peaceful demonstrators. Sikhs demanding more international action to stop "their betrayal in the Punjab", supporters of the



Dalai Lama simply waiting his arrival, as well as the sole efforts of one wife to plead that the world not forget the MIA's - from the Korean Conflict!

Once inside the children were further challenged to differentiate between research and propaganda, fact or fiction. Treated like world dignitaries they attended private conferences, listened to and asked questions of leaders from such organizations as UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity as well as the extreme positions of such groups as the PLO and Mrs Arafat.

When it seemed like little more could be packed into a day the children demonstrated their vigor by sharing their stories, music and art. They worked with Marvin Hamlisch ("A Chorus Line") to produce a talent show and presented it before a live audience and local camera crew to help finance their own conference.

They explored the inner city of Vienna and discovered the house of Mozart and the allure of *Stammcafe*, "regular coffee shops". They admired the beauty of the traditional gothic architecture and the grandeur of St. Stephan's Cathedral. They immersed themselves in the local culture while awakened to the spread of "mass world culture" apparent in the ever present golden arches of MacDonald's as well as posters announcing concerts by such diverse American rock legends as Chuck Berry and "Metallica".

Upon return to the states the four Glastonbury students were immediately encouraged to summarize their experiences and they then decided to forward a letter of concern to President Clinton. The letter contained the urgent appeal that the President review and consider signing The Convention on the Rights of the Child. Beyond this the students intend to pursue improved language skills as well as individual action oriented projects relating to their summer's experience.

In retrospect without the support and prestige of the United Nations to validate the World

Youth Conference the results would have been negligible instead of empowering. When the conference organizers and the United Nations determined that their goal was to develop the voice and leadership skills of young people they truly reached the core of sustainable development and guaranteed human rights. They have taken the first step to move beyond a reactionary peace keeping to an action oriented peace building by:

- \* providing the forum at which children could share diverse cultures, art and experiences

- \* providing the organized program where young leaders could develop hopes and dreams through research, interaction and consensus building

- \* providing the political, international, and historic setting (UN Conference on Human Rights) that necessarily empowered youth while invigorating youth initiative

- \* increasing the potential of youth to understand and realize change at the personal, local and global levels

- \* establishing a worldwide network of concerned and action oriented young leaders

- \* establishing a precedence upon which future meetings and perhaps ongoing assemblies of youth *in conjunction with the UN General Assembly* can be built.

In the near future world wide teleconferences will be arranged with the Vienna Conference participants. Additional plans are now being drawn for the 50th anniversary of the UN in 1995 with sites centered in both New York and San Francisco. As the frequency of opportunities for the improved understanding and empowerment among the children of the world increases so too does our chance for a more enlightened, secure and peaceful future.

**Daniel P. Moynihan**  
**NGO/UN Representative**  
**World Education Fellowship**  
**15 Mountain Brook Rd. West**  
**Hartford, CT 06117**



### **Social Education for Australian Primary Schools**

by Don E. Tinkler, Macro-View Educational Publications, Melbourne, Australia, 1989, 176 pp., ISBN 0 7316 8464 8

This publication is based on the author's *Humanities Core Curriculum Chart* first published in 1981 and subsequently revised in 1989. The new chart, in two colours, comes with the teacher's handbook, which is essentially what the book is. *Humanities Core Curriculum* has been devised by Don Tinkler as an integrated curriculum in social education for children in years K-6 in primary schools with special reference to the Australian Scene. However, much that the chart contains has a 'futures' perspective and could easily be transferred, with suitable adjustments, to comparable cultures. Tinkler's curriculum model recognised the contributions of former theorists such as Dewey and Piaget (both of whom were influential in the early days of WEF), and is designed to provide a range of experiences for children built up spirally year by year. From their social studies as envisaged within the *Humanities Core Curriculum* matrix the author has a vision of children gaining a conceptual network through which they can better understand, come to grips with, and interpret their world. I am convinced that where teachers, in an intelligent and selective fashion, follow the guidance provided by the author, then such a vision has every chance of being fulfilled. Year by year the topics covered include Change, Historical Time, Spatial Awareness, Self and Others, Community, Order in Society, Environment, Resource Use, Industry, Transport/communication, Marketing and the Wider World. Underlying such topic headings, of course, are aspects of anthropology, sociology, economics, political, life sciences, earth science, applied science, mathematics, history and geography.

The handbook itself is divided into five sections together with a forward by Bill Connell, the author's preface and introduction and a

concluding Epilogue. There is also a very handy list of references and an adequate index.

Section One provides a very worthwhile underpinning of theory to match classroom practice, and gives a conceptual understanding of the chosen clusters of new perspectives in social education as detailed in the chart. Section Two gives help in designing actual classroom programmes together with four options for implementing the *Humanities Core Curriculum* ideas.

The Third Section discusses various issues relating to the curriculum, such as learning from direct experience, home-school co-operation, education about the media, consumer economics for the primary school, and so on.

The final two sections are particularly valuable to primary school teachers and trainers. They cover Learning and Teaching: A Futures Perspective and Ideas for Teaching Practice. In the Fourth Section Don Tinkler discusses the important issues of Thinking, Concept Development and Skill Building, together with the skills of problem solving and learning to learn. The Fifth Section concludes with a very helpful consideration of Resources For Social Education, covering not only libraries, films, television programmes and videos, newspapers and magazines, but also human resources such as teachers' and parents' experiences and visitors - and even advertising brochures and 'Junk Mail'!

Don Tinkler made a valuable contribution to our first Learner Managed Learning Conference in 1990 and has established a distinctive reputation for himself as a thinker and practitioner at the forefront of educational development and progress. He has done the education world a real service in providing us with the fruits of his many years of experience. This book should prove to be of interest and value not only to institutions involved in teacher education but also to headteachers and curriculum coordinators in primary schools. For teachers in England the book is an example of how many of the requirements of the National Curriculum can be met not only in an integrated



and structured way, but also one which is lively, stimulating, and pupil-orientated.

**Reg Richardson**  
**Secretary, WEF (GB Section)**

### **We Are Mesquakie, We Are One**

by Hadley Irwin

Sheba Feminist Publishers, England, 1980, pp. 118, ISBN 0 907179 25 8, £2.75

With *We Are Mesquakie, We Are One*, there is no need to explain why a book that has been around for some time should be reviewed now. It has a theme and messages that are still not readily available or accepted in many parts of the world, but in fact are even more important now.

The story is about Hidden Doe, a Mesquakie, an American Indian, from her birth to the birth of her first child. She is helped by her grandmother, Gray Gull to not only understand the world around her, but to guide her into a real understanding of the Mesquakie, their ancestors, their values and their beliefs. The second strand that goes through the story is that of the effect of the coming of the Europeans on the American Indians generally, and their response.

The story is told by Hidden Doe herself and this is what gives it its charm. Trying to understand another way of life can be a difficult task. If the narrative is by an anthropologist, then the account is likely to be academic, full of academic jargon, which may well give an artificial picture of the people's values and their inter-relationships. Some similar criticism can also be made if the story is written in the third person. The autobiographical nature of *We Are Mesquakie, We Are One* makes it possible for the author to use the equivalent phraseology in English in order to mark the distinctiveness of the people and their culture. For instance, Gray Gull addresses the River Iowa as follows: "Grandmother Earth, you have taught my eyes to see beyond this day, my ears to hear words not yet spoken. I honor the strong medicine flowing from you through me. Care for us and for this girl-child who will be. Teach her your ways so she, too, will be honored among our Red Earth People."

The style is simple and the narrative is very much to the point. Yet the feelings and thoughts of the individuals are conveyed very effectively. In particular the relationships between the Europeans and the American Indians and its different facets, is gently but sensitively handled. The first time Hidden Doe sees a European girl she is amazed:

"Her legs were thin like reeds and white as birchbark. I hid in a clump of willows and watched.

In all my eight summers, I had never seen a White One. Clutching Spotted Fawn, my doll, I huddled deeper among the branches.

I looked all around the banks of the creek, but I could not see the sicknesses and the firewater that Great Bear, my father said all White Ones bring. All I could see were heavy leather moccasins on the far bank and a headdress made of cloth. She did not seem evil."

Later on Hidden Doe goes on to say,

"She is not evil. She is a *me*, but she is white."

The theme of relations is developed in a very interesting way at the two levels; one is the relationship between Hidden Doe and the White One who Hidden Doe then names the White Gull, which in itself is an interesting pointer as Hidden Doe's grandmother is the Gray Gull. The other level is the fate of the Mesquakie as a group, their forced move to a reservation and the consequent struggle to buy their own land back.

There are two main audiences for this book. One is the general reader who may be initially put off by the shortness of the book, as best sellers appear to be very long books. However, for those who appreciate and value books such as those of the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, who are involved with and affected by the encounter of different cultures, will want to read the book.

The second group of readers must be teachers at the secondary school level, who would then want to use the book as a part of their literature work with the pupils. In trying to understand the complex issues in the world today, an understanding of differences and the consequent variations in perceptions is vital for the youngsters that we hope will be positive about inter-cultural relationships. The media often depicts American Indians in a stereotypic way,



as backward and uncivilized, in a stark contrast to the Europeans. The area of encounters has become particularly relevant today in view of five hundred years since Columbus's first arrival in America. Children cannot understand by reading one book what are the complexities of the issues involved, but they can be introduced to a mental outlook which looks at people in their own right, tries to understand events from their viewpoint, and then works out where the individual himself or herself stands. This must be a part of becoming an independent thinking individual.

**Sneh Shah**  
**School of Humanities and Education**  
**University of Hertfordshire**

**Changing Classroom Cultures:  
Anti-racism, Politics and Schools**

by Debbie Epstein, Trentham Books 1993, 168 pp. ISBN 0 948080 65 5 Price £10.95

As an LEA Adviser about to return to primary headship in a mainly white area, I approached this book with great interest. What theoretical basis and practical advice with regard to changing schools for the better does the author offer from her experience as teacher, researcher, lecturer and adviser?

I was not disappointed. The book offers an overview of the theoretical basis for education for equality and, through case-studies, practical examples of anti-discriminatory education. The author approaches equality issues as they present themselves in classrooms, full of the complexities of personal background, belief, history, power relations and school culture.

Significantly, the author avoids simplistic definitions of racism and the theoretical issues tackled are contemporary and challenging. The key issues are presented openly, for example, in her discussion of accountability she acknowledges that schools need to satisfy the legitimate demands of parents and governors for information and greater involvement. However, she argues wisely for a wider definition of accountability as "narrative" between schools, students and parents.

Through the medium of micro-political case studies the author presents strategies for anti-racism in a self-critical and self-evaluative mode which does not lay claim to easy answers. The case studies are illuminating, given that the key "initiators" of change vary from school to school. As a humbling reminder to headteachers, the change agents described do not always include the headteacher.

The importance of collaborative teaching is explored together with the need for explicit "contracts" stating who will do what and when, and the need for carefully measured steps towards policy development and implementation. This is good advice for advisers and advisory teachers to consider in the new climate of purchasers and providers.

Those who have tried to move schools (and indeed some LEAs !) on in terms of equal opportunities will recognise the need for "high level legitimisation" and for good allies. It can be difficult enough for the "initiator" even when such legitimisation is present, for there are always the "bandwagoners, blockers, laggards, don't knows and opinion leaders" in every school or support service.

In the early chapters the author describes racism as a process which changes over time and place, presently focusing mainly on black people. Race, as she rightly states, is itself a changing concept, developed originally to categorise and subjugate others, but now reclaimed as part of black people's subjective identity. Nevertheless racism exerts a powerful influence on individual, school and society.

In opposing racism, black people have needed to define themselves politically. This, the author says, is both necessary and dangerous in the sense that it obscures differences between black groups. This represents a helpful explanation of why many people choose to identify themselves as black.

She goes on to discuss the impact of the thinking of the New Right and the Labour Party New Realist politics on the possibilities for anti-racist and anti-sexist education. An important idea in the book is that of "discourses," by which the author refers to the competing ways of understanding and describing activities such as education and anti-racist pedagogy. These



competing discourses influence behaviour and are mixtures of theory and perceptions based on experience.

Discourses in schools have changed as a result of media transmission of New Right thinking and the absence of concerted opposition from the Labour Party and the Unions (until recently). Anti-racist and anti-sexist discourse in politics and in schools has been derided by the politicians and by the media. This opposition to thought and discussion about equality has become itself a "discourse of derision". The dominant discourse is that of standards and accountability, which in turn is translated into market forces and accountability to higher authority.

In chapter 6 we see the theoretical underpinnings of child-centred education related to anti-racist education. In the author's view, the "dominant versions of child-centred education" have either led to the avoidance of equality issues in primary education or to unhelpful forms of multi-cultural education. I have sympathy with this view, having witnessed many out-of-context assemblies and rarely seen examples of teaching about the lives and experiences of black people, women, people with disabilities or the unemployed and poor in the 1990's.

She argues persuasively that the rational cognitive approach of Piaget with its emphasis on stages of child development, built on by Plowden with its emphasis on the individual child, has led to the assumption, widespread amongst teachers, that primary age children cannot handle the concepts of racism and sexism, nor may they be regarded as belonging to social groups with complex power relationships. Plowden's stress on the individual has also led to a deficit model of underachievement whereby "deficiencies" lie with the child rather than in the school structure and curriculum.

The author cites alternative theoretical positions to demonstrate that children as young as two are capable of "decentring" and show awareness of others' thoughts and feelings. She quotes Walkerdine to show how children are aware of dominant ideologies, as expressed, for example in racist and sexist language.

As she clearly demonstrates, children are involved in "making meaning through language". In doing so they construct and reconstruct social inequalities. Anyone who has worked with primary children would immediately recognise that they do know the power of certain words (discourses) and their capacity to befriend, affirm, and support or to hurt, humiliate and reject.

In school playgrounds words and relationships are constantly being experimented with and played out with attitudes being built in the process and stereotypes learnt. In organised classroom role play primary pupils show tremendous awareness of the power structure in the home and the school and their capacity to act within it.

In discussing ways of teaching against racism the author rejects the notion of the teacher as "neutral chairperson". What indeed would be the "neutral position" on slavery or the holocaust? She prefers the openness of the teacher stating her position in such a way as not to preclude disagreement and inviting the students to express their views and to analyse each others' views and her own. Her overriding concern is with the need not to treat racism as a purely individual matter but as one with personal and social elements.

The author identifies the need to include affective and cognitive elements within anti-racist education and in chapter seven illustrates this point with case studies of working with children of different ages. She identifies ways of challenging racial and gender stereotypes which support the individuals concerned whilst rejecting the specific behaviour or attitude. Her strategy involves offering them alternative ways of behaving and understanding. The case studies would make for extremely useful discussion in INSET courses and school based workshops.

My only reservations about the book are that it feels at times like a collection of essays and has an incredibly broad focus taking in political and educational theory as well as classroom practice, and gender and race issues. Nevertheless it contains important insights within its wide scope into questions of, for example, the relationship between



underachievement and self-esteem amongst black pupils and the nature of change in the context of school micro-politics. It is a genuine attempt to link theory with anti-racist / anti-sexist practice which is much needed in education in these inegalitarian and difficult times.

**Richard Sachse**  
**Humanities Inspector**  
**London Borough of Harrow**  
**England**

### **The Hickey Multisensory Language Course**

Edited by Jean Augur and Suzanne Briggs

With a Forward and Introduction by Elizabeth Adams

Whurr Publishers Ltd. London (2nd. Edition)  
1992, 446 pp.

This is the second edition of the Hickey Multisensory Language Course first produced by Kathleen Hickey in 1977 and now revised and updated by two of the teachers who have been trained in the use of the 'Hickey Kit'. The impetus for the original text came from remedial work with children with specific literacy difficulties and the programme became the basis for the British Dyslexia Association's Teaching Diploma. Yet, as the authors of the current edition note, the philosophy underlying the programme and the comprehensiveness of the content make it 'available and appropriate for all learners'. The book, therefore, appears to be addressed to all teachers who are concerned with the teaching of literacy and claims to offer a method through which all children can achieve literacy, regardless of constitutional difficulties. It offers a dense and complex programme which the current editors hope they have made more 'user-friendly', but nevertheless it may need the motivation of a pupil with intractable difficulties before many teachers will be prepared to take the time and effort to master it.

The book is divided into three sections: Part I provides the theory underlying the approach. There is a brief description of some of the difficulties that a 'dyslexic' learner may have but there is no discussion of the controversy

surrounding the nature of dyslexia as a concept nor any real attempt to distinguish 'dyslexics' from poor or even beginning readers. Instead there is a rationale for a multisensory approach to the teaching of literacy which, it is suggested, would benefit all learners but is essential for some. Parts II and III give step by step detail of the language training course itself. At each step the teacher is told what and how to teach and is given examples of techniques and materials, but s/he can expand or develop different aspects to fit in with other areas of the curriculum as appropriate.

This is not a scholarly work and there is little use made of the research literature either on specific learning difficulties or the teaching of literacy skills. Neither does it really enter the controversy between 'real books' versus a 'phonic' approach other than to point out that the dichotomy is a false one. Being multisensory, this programme uses phonics as part of its armoury and the structured sequential method used is definitely a 'bottom up' approach aimed at the initial decoding process. In that sense, it is on the side of the current research showing that the psycholinguistic guessing game is only operational when each word has been decoded, or when there has been a failure to decode. But the authors point out that decoding is only one aspect of teaching reading and real books must be used to allow the child to enjoy being read to and to see the point of the process. There is also no reason why 'shared' or 'paired' reading approaches could not be carried on as separate but complementary to this very structured decoding process.

The book is also in line with recent research in its emphasis on the syllable as the unit of analysis, on the teaching of visual analogies, and on the importance of letter names as a more reliable guide to their pronunciation than traditional 'sounding out' approaches. However, I do wonder at the age and/or cognitive level of the pupils at whom this programme is directed. Part of the programme involves metalinguistic awareness in identifying phonemes and diacritic marks to indicate, for example, the length of a vowel and there is evidence that such awareness only comes as a result of reading. This might work where an



older child is coming to the programme as 'remediation' following teaching instruction that has failed, but I wonder whether many five year olds could cope with the level of analysis required. More helpfully, spelling is shown to be rule governed to an extent that many (including I) might not have realised and there is the very sensible advice that printing should be reserved for capital letters only and that lower case letters should be taught (for writing) in a way that enables them to be 'joined up' from the beginning. Teaching young children the much more difficult task of printing to begin with, and then having to 'unlearn' him/her two years later is one of the more obviously absurd traditions in education in the UK.

In its original formulation as a programme for teaching literacy skills to pupils with specific learning difficulties, then, this book is to be highly recommended. Even so, it will be hard going for many teachers. This is not so much because of any specialist language knowledge required, since no technical terms are used without full explanation, but simply because of the painstaking way each small step of the programme is justified, explained and developed. I can imagine such a programme forming the basis of an INSET course where teachers can progress a step at a time, gaining practical understanding as they use the programme, rather than trying to master the full programme before its implementation. It appears that the authors intend teachers to be able to use the kit independently and there is certainly sufficient material for this to happen. My own view is, however, that most teachers would need some support in using it.

Whether it could be used as a general teaching methodology for literacy skills is even more problematic, although there are clear benefits in including children with special educational

needs and in solving some of the resourcing dilemmas that come from having to seek statements for 'dyslexic' pupils. Research shows that many teachers enter the profession with an inadequate understanding of the reading process or how to go about teaching it and such a definite and comprehensive approach would be very helpful to them, and their pupils. Yet research also shows that schools have entrenched attitudes to the teaching of reading (even if they are more eclectic than John Patten would allow) and probationary teachers feel compelled to adopt the method of the school. Of course there are 'chicken and egg' issues here and it might be that a probationer with a secure knowledge of such an approach would act as a resource for a school in developing its literacy policy.

On the whole the book is well set out and easy to read, given the level of complexity of its content. There is a degree of repetition between part I and the other parts but this saves the reader having to search for material and so is welcome. The book also contained few errors which is becoming worthy of note these days. Nevertheless, I did find a few, and they are particularly tiresome in that they are hard to detect. It is a bit like finding errors in the calculations in a Maths text; you have to spend a long time checking to satisfy yourself that it is an error and that your lack of understanding is not the culprit. Such an error may be enough to upset the confidence of a teacher struggling with this admirable, but weighty, text.

**Dr Rita Jordan**  
**School of Humanities and Education**  
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(Since she wrote this review, Dr Jordan has taken up a post at the University of Birmingham)



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